

SCOTLAND'S STORY

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state terror hits
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shy phenomenon
or monster myth?**




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ATLANTIC
OCEAN

1607

The Plantation of Ulster commences.



1672

Future James VII becomes a Catholic, following the death of his wife, Anne Hyde.



1679

June: Covenanters victorious against the government at Drumclog.



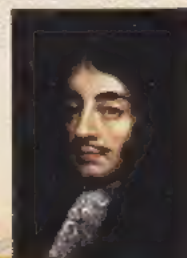
1679

November: 258 Covenanting prisoners perish when prison ship sinks off Orkney.



1681

Test Act asserts Charles II's superiority in all matters ecclesiastical and civil.



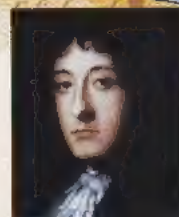
1685

James VII and II succeeds the thrones of Great Britain.



1684

John Graham of Claverhouse orders execution of 'Enterkin Liberators'.



1686

Death of masked fugitive minister Alexander 'prophet' Peden.



1688

James VII's second wife, Mary of Modena, gives birth to the future 'James VIII'.



**In Part 27:
A 'Glorious'
Revolution?**

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North
Channel

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COVER: James VII has been vilified for centuries. But recently the verdict on the last Stuart king has begun to change.

Killing Times for the Covenanters

For much of the Restoration period, leading Covenant radicals were treated as outlaws, their religion effectively subjected to a series of bans, and they and their people forced to hold illegal religious meetings in the fields.

Known as conventicles – whose participants are often referred to as the Conventiclers – these meetings left those present running the risk of being imprisoned or murdered where they prayed. Several ministers were forced to become armed fugitives – such as the extraordinary Alexander 'prophet' Peden.

The Covenanters had their darkest hours after the future king James issued the Test Act in 1681, asserting the supreme authority of Charles II in civil and religious matters and disavowing the Covenants.

It was an action that directly precipitated the infamous Killing Times, which were clearly underway with the brutal execution of Covenanting activists in 1684. This terrible period in history witnessed a bloody conflict in which the state committed several shameful atrocities.

Incredibly, however, given its

historical importance and emotive nature, much of this period has so far evaded proper historical analysis – a problem that extends to some of the most significant aspects of the affair.

Scotland was not a leading scientific nation in the 17th century, but the country was by no means trailing behind the rest of Europe. Despite deep structural weaknesses in education which severely impeded the development of gifted intellects, Scotland still managed to produce men of genius and renown in two distinct scientific spheres – mathematics and medicine.

Standing alongside John Napier of Merchiston's mathematical innovations are the achievements of people like Robert Morison, physician to the king of France, and Britain's Charles II – and a distinguished botanical expert.

James VII and II was the last Stuart king to sit on the thrones of Britain – but why did he become the most hated?

The answer, it seems, lies not so much in how he actually governed, but more in what he came to represent...

■ The Covenanters defeat a Government force led by John Graham of Claverhouse at the Battle of Drumclog.



THE STATE UNLEASHES ITS TERROR

People were tortured and abused; hundreds were slain in the fields or executed. No wonder the Government's bloody crackdown on the Covenanters is still known today as The Killing Times

The Enterkin Pass in Dumfriesshire is a steep defile dropping down from the Lowther Hills to the River Nith. Through it runs an old drove road from Moniaive – the gateway to Galloway – northwards to Edinburgh. On July 29, 1684, a troop of dragoons was escorting a number of Covenanting prisoners through the pass when they were ambushed. A single shot sent a sergeant into the burn; there were a couple of other fatalities among troops and prisoners but many of the latter escaped.

Two weeks later, John Graham of Claverhouse, military supremo in the South-West where he had operated as a glorified policeman for six years, placed four captives on trial in Edinburgh, accused of taking part in the rescue. Tried at noon, they were hanged some three hours later.

Patrick Walker, who witnessed these events and lived to write about them, dated the beginning of the Killing Times to the execution of the Enterkin liberators.

It is in some ways difficult to distinguish this heavily-mythologised period from what went before. The 'West Country' had been rumbling ever since the Restoration and it began to seethe due to the depredations of Sir James Turner, whose task it was to levy fines from non-conformists and their sympathisers. His soldiers behaved like an army of occupation, quartering themselves upon private houses, seizing produce, violating women and beating their menfolk.

As early as 1665 a booklet was in

circulation entitled, *An Apologetical Narration of the Particular Sufferings of the Faithfull Ministers and Professors of the Church of Scotland Since 1660* by John Brown of Wamphray.

Soldierly abuse inspired the Pentland Rising of 1666 when a ragged peasant army of Covenanters marched on Dumfries, seized Turner, and while trying to decide on a plan of action, headed through Ayrshire and Lanark before making for Edinburgh. Outnumbered and ill-equipped, they were cut off by Lieutenant-General Tam Dalyell at Rullion Green. Dalyell, a veteran Russian mercenary, was said to have "acted the Muscovite too grossly", since his one idea for dealing with the "mad phanaticks" was to hang them. Many prisoners were executed, others imprisoned, and brutally repressive measures were inflicted on the areas which backed the insurrection, particularly Galloway and Nithsdale.

An uneasy peace, during which persecution was by no means entirely absent, prevailed for a decade or so but in 1677, for reasons best known to themselves, the authorities fomented rumours that a total uprising was imminent in the west of Scotland, with the result that the whole country was placed under martial law.

A notorious offshoot was the mustering in 1678 of the Highland Host, eventually some 8,000 strong, one-third of whom were raised in the the Lowlands. Victor Kiernan has suggested that this was a try-out for the later ploy of using Highland armies to foster colonial suppression, ▶





■ The murder of the hated turncoat Archbishop James Sharpe, by Covenanters under John Balfour who claimed to have a call from God to do the deed.

► the Gaels were pawns in a cruel and cynical manoeuvre. They gained much booty and lasting contempt through their depredations in the South-West.

The assassination of the hated turncoat, Archbishop Sharpe, was swiftly followed by another rising in which the Covenanters defeated Claverhouse at the Battle of Drumclog. A government victory at Bothwell Brig within the month (June, 1679) afforded some compensation, because 1,200 prisoners were taken. Many were released under a policy of temporary conciliation, but 258 perished when a ship taking them to penal servitude in the West Indies was wrecked off Orkney in November.

The atrocities inflicted by the government on its own people are reasonably well documented but it cannot be denied that there were also psychopaths in Covenanter ranks – one man's martyr is another's murderer.

The leaders of the 'Suffering Bleeding Remnant' – as those who adhered to the literal truth and eternal promise of the Covenants called themselves – were often in possession of brilliant intellects but

were sadly chained to religious dogma and terrifying single-mindedness. Leaders such as Richard Cameron were often young, blinkered and somewhat out of touch with reality. Few lived long before being claimed by the battle field or the gallows. Cameron was a true firebrand who sought the abolition of the royal family in favour of the establishment of a republic.

He also promised to meet violence with physical resistance. His Sanquhar Declaration of June, 1680, solemnly declared war on 'the tyrant' Charles II and disowned his Catholic brother, James, Duke of Albany and York, who now presided over Scottish affairs.

Cameron was killed at Airds Moss but there was a steady stream of would-be martyrs to take his place, men whose obsession with blood and sacrifice would not have shamed a Jesuit.

The most disgusting aspect of this sad period is the deliberate use of state terror. People were rounded up on their farms. The general population was bullied and abused by troops. Torture was liberally applied to prisoners in the shape of such diabolical implements as the boot and the thumbscrews so that

the condemned had to be carried to the gallows where their potentially-inflammatory dying speeches were drowned out by the sound of drum-rolls.

In 1681 James introduced the Test Act which required all office-holders – later extended to the populace at large – to subscribe an oath essentially recognising Charles as Supreme Governor in all matters ecclesiastical and civil while disavowing the Covenants.

This became the altar on which so much Covenanting blood was shed, the crucial prerequisite for the tragedy of the Killing Times. It amounted to a statement of all-out war as Claverhouse, with all the resources of the state, confronted the ever-more-radical Remnant led by James Renwick.

When James VII (and II) became King in 1685, to own the Covenants was labelled treason, and attendance at conventicles – open-air services – was punishable by death. His later attempts to mollify the opposition by granting toleration caused further trouble because the same concession was offered to Catholics, a totally unacceptable option when the forces of the Counter-Reformation seemed

at the point of wiping Protestantism off the European map.

Historians, depending upon which part of the political spectrum they happen to favour, ranging from Whig (a word first applied to the western Covenanters) all the way to Jacobite,



■ General Tam Dalyell: had only one idea to deal with 'mad phanatics'.

The condemned were carried to the gallows and their last words were drowned by the sound of drum rolls

a subjectivity further warped by religious sympathy, have completely failed to confront either the reality or the myths of the Killing Times, the history of which has yet to be written. Thus the Covenanters are either uncritically depicted as saints and martyrs – or deluded fanatics.

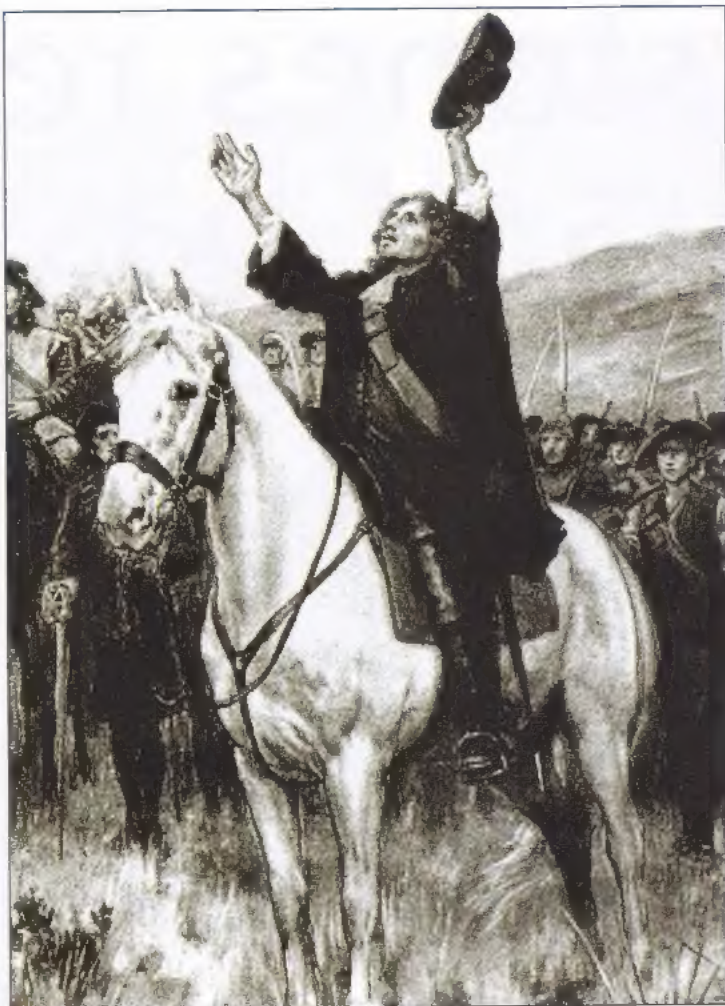
'Bluidy Clavers' is also 'Bonnie Dundee'. Divine Right kingship confronts the Republic of Jesus Christ. A handful of revolutionary terrorists challenges one of the most powerful states in Europe. The great ones of the land jockey for positions of power and patronage while humble people, and sometimes their children, bleed to death on the moors of the South-West.

Condemned by the Establishment Church of their day, the Covenanters by the mid-18th century furnished a heroic mythology for the Church of Scotland, a true martyrology which the Reformation had failed to provide, despite the best efforts of John Knox. Indeed, the Killing Times provide the only corpus of Lowland myths to even remotely challenge the later mythology surrounding the Highland Clearances. But unlike the latter phenomenon, that of the later Covenanters has so far resisted proper historical analysis.

The parallels are striking, for when Robert Wodrow compiled his *History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland* in the early 18th century he was acutely aware that many of the atrocities he described could not be documented save by oral tradition.

There is no absolute independent proof that Claverhouse really did personally execute schoolteacher John Brown of Priesthill, caught while innocently and idyllically casting peats, in front of his child and pregnant wife.

There is a similar problem with the infamous case of the Wigtown Martyrs over whom gallons of ink have been spilled. Margaret MacLaughlin, 63, and Margaret Wilson, 18, were sentenced to be drowned within the flood mark of



■ Richard Cameron: firebrand leader who sought abolition of royals.

the River Bladnoch. The elder died first, staked further out in the water, and the younger met a similar fate when she refused to recant.

Witnesses later testified to the truth of these events, both orally and in written accounts; the graves of the victims exist; petitions on behalf of both women survive but the evidence is contradictory and confusing. It can be objected that testimony and gravestones are easily manufactured.

Less easily dismissed is the unquestionable bloodthirstiness of government agents. Renwick's Declaration deplored "that hellish principle of killing all who were different in judgment or persuasion". Claverhouse was present at a council which agreed that all who failed to take the Test oath should be immediately killed "before two witnesses". A later council decreed that women guilty of such practices should be drowned.

On balance, there is little reason to doubt that the Wigtown Martyrs actually did meet their fate as described. Recent events in South Africa, Ulster or Kosovo should alert us to the exceptional difficulty

of finding proof in the matter of atrocities, especially those that are state-inspired. There was, alas, no Truth Commission after the Revolution which brought William II to the throne, a revolution for which the Remnant can take some of the credit and to which some of their less-extreme principles contributed.

John Howie of Lochgoil in his hugely influential *The Scots Worthies* (1775) attempted to estimate the numbers who suffered in the name of the Covenants. He arrived at the figure of 18,000 through imprisonment, banishment and death. In such calculations there is always a vested interest in exaggeration but his other figures are more acceptable.

He calculated that during the Killing Times 680 died fighting, 498 were slain in the fields and 362 suffered judicial execution. The fact is that we do not know and until the basic, and long overdue, research is undertaken, it is an impertinence to challenge his figures.

It is also pernicious to question the motives of those poor souls who shed their blood in the heather. They died for their beliefs. No woman or man can do more. ●

TIMELINE

1677-8

Scotland placed under martial law and 8,000-strong 'Highland Host' raised to suppress Covenanting radicals in the South-West.

1679

June: Government troops defeated at Battle of Drumclog, followed by victory at Bothwell Brig: 1,200 Covenanters are taken prisoner.

1679

November: 258 Covenanting prisoners perish when the ship transporting them to penal servitude sinks off Orkney.

1679-82

Prince James lives in Holyrood Palace. Like Charles, he favours Scotland's independence within a multi-kingdom monarchy.

1681

Test Act demands acceptance of Charles II as supreme in all matters ecclesiastical and civil.

1684

July-August: Rescue bid liberates Covenanting prisoners at Enterkin, Dumfriesshire. Liberators later caught and executed in Edinburgh.

1684-7

The Killing Times: Government persecution of Covenanters. Possible estimate is 680 killed fighting, 498 slain in the fields, and 362 executed.

1685

James VII of Scotland (II of Great Britain) succeeds after death of Charles II.

1687

James lays the foundations of his downfall with the attempt to grant religious Toleration to Presbyterians and Catholics.

1688

The acquittal of English bishops opposed to Toleration, and the birth of James's Catholic son, precipitate a constitutional revolution.

Cold stones recall fighters of passion



■ Marking the spot where John Nisbet was executed on April 14, 1683 – a modern plaque laid in the floor of Kilmarnock's Burns Shopping Centre.

You don't have to look far in Scotland for monuments and gravestones dedicated to Covenanters who died for their cause. Each has its story, and it's usually tragic

Scotland is littered with monuments commemorating the Covenanters. Most of these are in the South-West, simply because Covenanting zeal was at its strongest in that part of the country, but others are to be found scattered over the landscape.

Starting with battles, the monument to the Pentland Rising at Rullion Green stands reasonably close to Edinburgh, above the A702, north of Penicuik. Rullion Green was fought on November 28, 1666, and the Government forces under the command of Tam Dalyell of The Binns killed about 50 Covenanters who were part of a force marching on Edinburgh. The monument stands on the edge of a wood near Rullion Green Farm.

The Covenanters had a victory at Drumclog on June 1, 1679. A large prayer meeting was in progress, and word of this reached John Graham of Claverhouse and his dragoons.

They attacked, but early warning was given of their approach, and the Covenanters were able to offer a bold resistance, managing to kill many of the dragoons and routing the remainder. A

monument marks the spot, erected in 1839. It was struck by lightning and had to be rebuilt in 1867. The monument stands on an unclassified road, a little north-west of the village of Drumclog itself – on the A71 between Darvel and Strathaven.

The monument gives a view towards Loudoun Hill where Wallace and Bruce both fought battles, so this corner of Scotland is rich in a legacy of turbulent times.

The victory at Drumclog led directly to the Covenanters making a stand at Bothwell Brig on June 22, 1679. Four thousand of them on the western end of the bridge were assailed by 10,000 Government troops approaching from the east. Badly led, the Covenanters soon broke. Many were slaughtered and around 1,200 taken prisoner. The original bridge over the Clyde still stands, although it has been widened and modernised to deal with increased traffic flow.

The tall obelisk which marks the battle stands on the western end of the bridge, and the bridge itself stands close to Junction Five of the M74. If you take the turn-off towards Bothwell, there is a lay-by



■ Laigh Churchyard, Kilmarnock: remembering John Ross and John Shields.



...and a monument to Bothwell Brig prisoners drowned at Orkney.

just before the mini roundabout at the end of the bridge where you can park to view the site.

Even reasonably large-scale motor atlases usually have one or two of these battle sites marked with the crossed swords and date motif signifying a scene of conflict.

Many old graveyards contain Covenanters' graves. For taking part in Covenanting activity, William Harvey was executed at the cross in Lanark. His stone can be found in the churchyard surrounding the ruined St Kentigern's Church in Lanark. Just behind the ruin itself. It bears a skull on one side and the inscription: *Here lies William Harvey who suffered at the cross of Lanark, 2nd March 1682. Age 38. For his adherence to the word of God and Scotland's Covenanted work of Reformation.*

Three gravestones to various Covenanters stand in the graveyard at nearby Lesmahagow, and a little north up the M74 at Stonehouse there is an interesting stone in the old graveyard overlooking the River Avon, bearing the inscription *Here lies, or near this, James Thomas who was shot in an encounter at Drumclog on June 1st 1679, by Bloody Graham of Cloverhouse for his adherence to the word of God and Scotland.*

Close to Stonehouse is the village of Glassford, and by the ruins of the old church there stands a monument to William Gordon who was shot by soldiers on his way to Bothwell Bridge.

Glasgow has several Covenanters' graves. There is one in Sighthill Cemetery to James Nisbet, who was executed on June 5, 1648, and to James Lawson and Alexander Wood who were executed on October 24, 1684. This stone originally stood underneath a flyover on the M8 just north of

Here lies one who 'suffered for his adherence to the word of God and Scotland's Covenanted work of Reformation'

Glasgow Cathedral, but it was a well-hidden spot after nightfall, and the decision was taken to move it to Sighthill where it could be better looked after.

The cathedral itself has a plaque at the top of the stair to the crypt, commemorating nine individuals who were executed at Glasgow Cross between 1668 and 1688.

If in this vicinity, it is worth visiting the Museum of Religion, which stands before Glasgow Cathedral. This building has several relics of Covenanting times.

To the south of Glasgow, Old Cathcart churchyard, huddled around the older, or ruined church, contains the burial place of three Covenanters, Thomas Cook, John Urie and Robert Thom. These three were shot at Polmadie, now a district of the south side of Glasgow.

The steeple of the old church still stands, giving

a pointer of the churchyard's location to the casual visitor. The gravestone stands near the steeple, and a later metal plate carries a copy of the inscription.

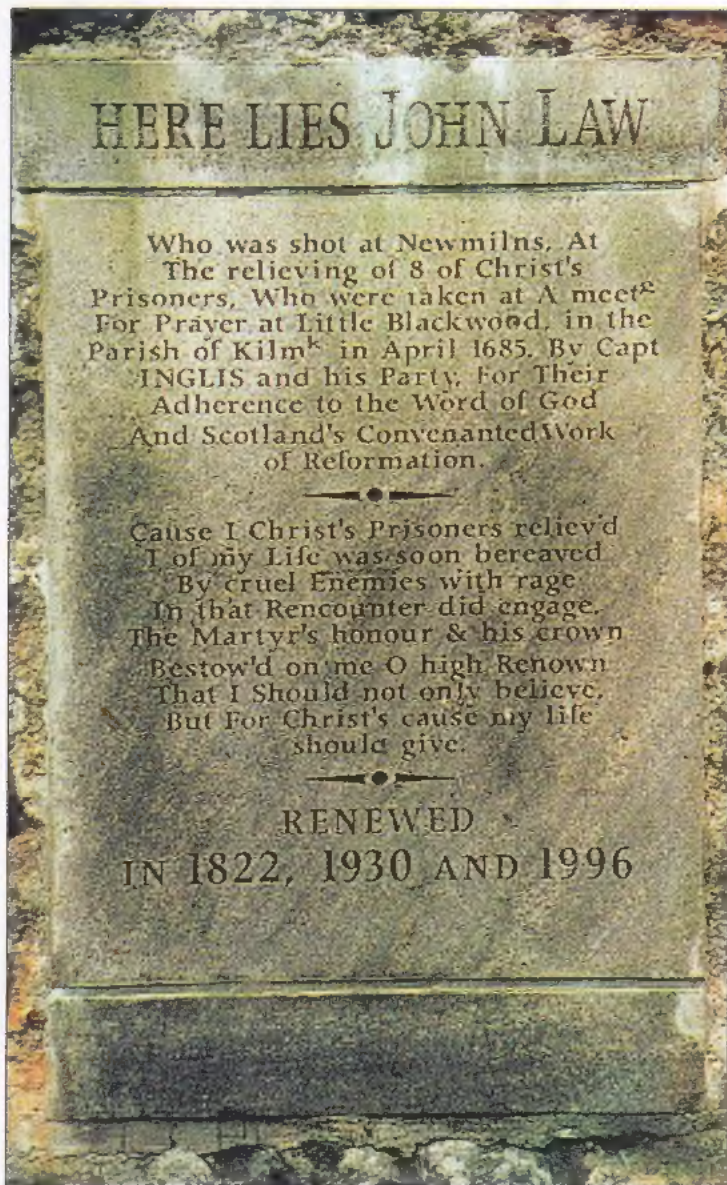
Visitors may also wish to view the scant remains of Cathcart Castle in nearby Old Castle Road, and opposite the castle remains, a stone marks the spot where Mary, Queen of Scots viewed the Battle of Langside.

There are several other gravestones well worth visiting further south-west than the aforementioned. Alexander Peden is interred in the burial ground at Cumnock. There are also inscriptions to Thomas Richard, Simon Paterson and David Dunn, who were all shot in 1685.

Dumfries was a hotbed of Covenanting faith, and in the Old Parish Churchyard there are monuments showing the last resting places of William Grierson, William Welsh and James Kirk.

One of Scotland's better-known stories and one of its most infamous regarding Covenanting times, is the story of the Wigtown Martyrs. Two women, Margaret Wilson, only 18, and Margaret MacLauchlan were supposedly tied to stakes below the high water mark where the River Bladnoch enters Wigtown Bay on the Solway. These two were then drowned by the incoming tide. Their graves are believed to be in the Old Churchyard in Wigtown, along with a grave containing the remains of William Johnston, John Milroy and George Walker. These three had been executed by hanging for their belief in the Covenant. The three gravestones stand within a railed enclosure.

Near Wigtown, a tall obelisk has been raised to the memory of the drowned females, and is ►



■ A particularly well-kept Covenanter's stone at Newmilns, Ayrshire.



■ Monument to the Covenanters' victory at Drumclog – near the village.

Many prisoners were kept – alive – in Greyfriars Churchyard in Edinburgh for months in 1679

► marked on most maps as 'The Martyrs' Monument'.

The spot where the drownings are said to have taken place is now on reclaimed land, and a memorial in the shape of a stake marks the spot.

Heading towards the north-east, Cupar's old graveyard has a gravestone marking the last resting place of the heads of Laurence Hay and Andrew Pitulloch, and the hand of David Hackston. These unfortunates had been executed at Edinburgh, and these parts of their bodies had been sent to Cupar to be displayed as a warning to others.

Dunnotar graveyard, south of Stonehaven, and inland from the famous castle which was used as a Covenanters' prison, has a gravestone marking the last resting place of some who perished trying to escape from the aforementioned prison.

But the most northerly Covenanters' grave marker must be the monument in Orkney at Mull Head of Deerness, which stands above the last resting place of some 258 Covenanters who were being transported to the Americas when their ship hit rocks and sank. The prisoners were under lock

and key below decks and had no means of escape.

Apart from the many gravestones, there are other remnants of Covenanting times scattered here and there. Inside the Burns Shopping Centre in Kilmarnock there is, laid in the floor, a plaque bearing the statement *John Nisbet was executed here, 14th April, 1683*. Nisbet's gravestone is in Kilmarnock's Laigh Kirkyard, but this plaque marks the actual site of his execution.

In Greyfriars Churchyard in Edinburgh – famous worldwide for its "Greyfriars Bobby" connection – the rear section bears a sign stating 'Covenanters Prison' as you enter the

gate. Many prisoners were indeed kept here for several months in 1679.

At the south-east corner of the church is a flat stone surrounded by a railing that is reputed to be the site of the signing of the National Covenant.

Although the one on display in the Huntly House Museum in the Canongate is reputed to be the original, there is a copy on display inside St Giles Cathedral, standing beside Montrose's tomb. His signature can be seen in the top left of the bottom section.

John Graham of Claverhouse – known to his admirers as 'Bonnie Dundee' and to his enemies as 'Bloody Clavers' – is one of the main players of Covenanting times. He died at the Battle of Killiecrankie in 1689, killed by a stray bullet that prevented him from seeing his army score a victory over the forces of William of Orange.

He was buried in the church at Old Blair. This is now a ruin, situated in the grounds of Blair Castle at Blair Atholl on the A9. A tablet on the wall of the church commemorating Graham was erected by the seventh Duke of Atholl in 1889. ●



A king whose beliefs cost him the crown

■ An old man in a hurry: the fleeing James VII threw the Great Seal in the Thames.

In the past he has been cast as a figure of hate, but the verdict on the last Stuart king has at last begun to change

Britain as we know it today is the product of the 'Glorious' Revolution of 1688, which saw the end of the reign of James VII (and II in England), the beginnings of the idea of unlimited parliamentary sovereignty, and the centralisation of government in London. James's multiple-kingdom monarchy, with its outlying capitals in Edinburgh and Dublin, was shattered, as was his promotion of catholicism in Ireland and tolerance of it in Britain.

The very fact that this Revolution is still called 'Glorious' reflects the fact that history is written by the

victors. The term itself was first used by an MP in 1689, to indicate that the Revolution had been bloodless.

This was and is a very Anglocentric point of view. War in Scotland raged for almost three years, while Ireland has still not recovered from the cataclysmic struggle of 1689-91.

In the days of the British Empire, James was seen as wicked and futile, his Catholic policies an affront to history in which Protestant Britain had come to lead the world. More recently, there has been a change in emphasis.

But who was this last Stuart king, who has been so demonised? What

was he like? James was born in 1633, the son of Charles I and his French wife, Henrietta Maria. The execution of his father in 1649 left a lasting impact on him as a boy. Believing that his father had not been firm enough with those who opposed him, James was rigid and unbending.

When in 1688 his control freakery ended in disaster, he suffered a mental collapse, fearing himself to be on the brink of his father's fate.

In the normal course of events, James would never have expected to succeed to the throne. His conversion to catholicism in 1669, following the birth of two daughters ►



■ The baby James, whose birth in 1688 precipitated the King's fall.

► by his Anglican wife Anne Hyde, became constitutionally critical as it became clear that his brother, Charles II (of whose own Catholic leanings James was well aware), would leave no direct heir. When he married again, to the Catholic Mary of Modena in 1673, the prospect of not only a Catholic king but a Catholic heir loomed.

Attempts were made to exclude James from the throne, and while England was mired in constitutional wrangling and anti-Catholic hysteria, James came to Holyrood Palace, where for much of three years from 1679-82 he held court and promoted art, learning and the institutions of the capital. Like his brother, he favoured development of Scotland and Ireland, with their record of Stuart loyalism, as separate countries within a multi-kingdom monarchy.

In 1685, he wrote a memorandum opposing Union. On his succession to the throne in 1685, he had to face a revolt from his half brother, the Duke of Monmouth, whom he later executed. James then adopted a policy of placing Catholics in establishment positions where he could, though it was only really in Ireland that he flooded the officer class with them, particularly after his strong supporter, Tyrconnell, was appointed viceroy there in 1687.

In England, the beginnings of the Revolution which brought James down lay not so much in his personal Catholicism as in the perceived threat he posed to the Church of England's special status. The king sought to extend religious Toleration to Protestant non-conformists (he released nearly 2,000 Quakers from prison) and Catholics alike, thus undermining Anglican privilege.

The Church of England fought back — seven bishops who refused to

announce Toleration were put on trial in 1688 and acquitted, in what was a major propaganda coup for the Anglican establishment. Ironically, the majority of them later supported James against William.

There were also fears James might seek to return to the Church property confiscated at the Reformation, thus strengthening its dependence on the Crown. Concerns that Charles I had been doing this in the 1630s had contributed to the war that followed. Despite the alarm caused by James's pro-Catholic policies among the British elite, there was a widespread feeling that it couldn't last. Both his daughters were Protestants, and as no Stuart king since Robert III had lived beyond 60, James at 55 was very much an old man in a hurry.

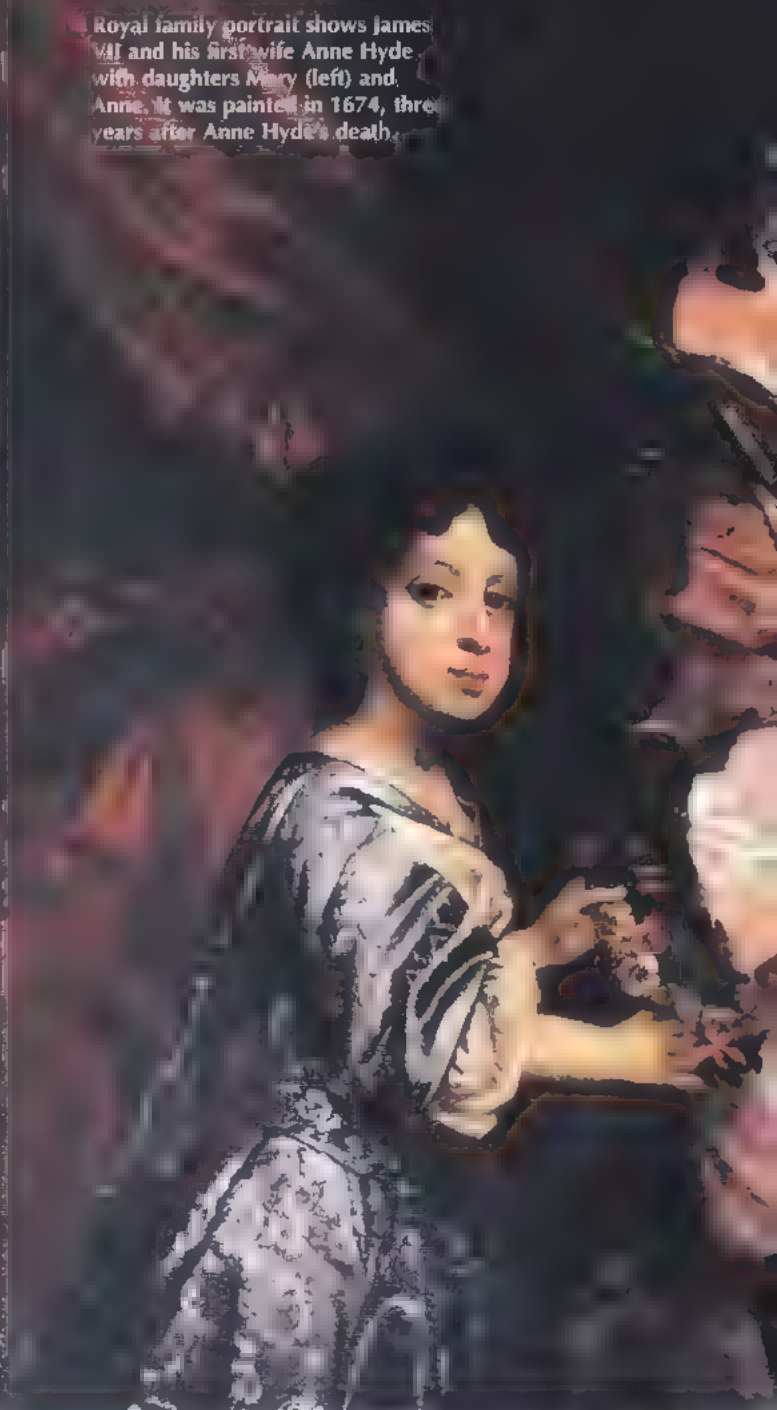
Then Mary of Modena bore him a son — the future Jacobite claimant, 'James VIII' — in June, 1688. A small group of Anglican magnates, eager to preserve their own positions, invited William of Orange, James's nephew and son-in-law, to England to ensure a 'free' Parliament.

William, who was in any case already making preparations to invade to prevent James making any alliance with Louis XIV of France, landed on November 5 with 15,000 men. The Scottish Privy Council ordered two divisions of the Scottish army to be sent south to defend James, who gathered an army of 30,000 just outside London.

At this point, his nerve failed him. He did not advance to meet William, but sat in misery and indecision as key units of his troops deserted, though most of the rank and file remained faithful. James retired to London and then fled, dropping the Great Seal in the Thames in a futile effort to preserve his sovereignty and legitimacy. Humiliatingly, he was captured by a party of fishermen and returned to London.

Despite signs of support there and a plea from Viscount Dundee, commander of his Scottish forces, to stand and fight, James — replying that "there is but a small distance between the prisons and the graves of kings" — fled once more. Mindful of his father's execution, he was also bitterly hurt by the desertion of both his daughters who, as well as betraying him, appeared to doubt the legitimacy of their own brother.

William let him go, because it suited him. English parliamentary opinion was divided between outright supporters of James, those who favoured a constitutional settlement such as regency which would curtail his powers while



Royal family portrait shows James VII and his first wife Anne Hyde with daughters Mary (left) and Anne. It was painted in 1674, three years after Anne Hyde's death.

preserving the succession, and those who favoured Mary and/or her husband William as monarchs.

James's flight enabled William's supporters to claim that the King had abdicated by abandoning his throne, which was therefore vacant. James's supporters were outmanoeuvred and the Tories who voted for regency were defeated by a settlement which proclaimed William and Mary joint monarchs, and gave the basis (through effective assertion of unlimited parliamentary sovereignty) of the British Constitution.

In Scotland, James's episcopalian regime was in trouble. William was ready to keep the episcopalians in power if they disowned James, but

that they were not willing to do. At the Scottish Convention which opened on March 14, 1689, the letter from James (or his Secretary of State, Melfort) was haughty and threatening, and helped to turn opinion in favour of William and Mary. Viscount Dundee famously left the Convention to set up James's standard, and a war began in Scotland which continued until the Massacre at Glencoe three years later.

Meanwhile, James had landed in Ireland with some 4,000 French troops. Tyrconnell had nearly 40,000 Irish under arms, and when James reluctantly agreed to the Dublin Parliament's demand



that the English Parliament had no right to pass laws for Ireland, the stage was set for the ferocious war of 1689-91, in which William and his generals, aided by some of the Ulster settlers, defeated the frequently indecisive and nervous James. Under the Treaty of Limerick, ratified in 1692, the remnants of James's Irish army went abroad to form a Jacobite army in exile in France. The Treaty's equivocal promise of Catholic

■ James VII founded the Order of the Thistle in 1687.

liberties was breached by a raft of new anti-Catholic legislation, and the Irish Brigades abroad bitterly resented this perceived betrayal.

James annoyed the French, who under Louis XIV were his staunch supporters, by cheering on the Royal Navy against the fleet of his hosts at the Battle of La Hogue in 1692.

Thereafter, he settled down to life in his court in exile at Saint Germain-en-Laye, which had been a seat of the French kings before the building of Versailles. Although some of his supporters, now called 'Jacobites' (from the Latin for James) plotted against William, he took little further part in politics from the mid 1690s.

His sanctity was so remarked on

at his death in 1701 that steps were taken to canonise him.

Besides his Catholicism, one of the key reasons why James was hated so much by his opponents was his legitimacy, important in an age when being 'rightful king' mattered a great deal. The claim of the main Stuart line to the thrones of England, Scotland and Ireland was uniquely strong; hence the need for the 'warming pan' story which alleged James's son was illegitimate.

James was the senior heir to the Saxon royal house through Malcolm III's marriage to St Margaret; he was the heir of the Plantagenets through several routes, and also of the Tudors, through James IV's marriage to

Henry VII's daughter. In Scotland, he was heir to Bruce, and in Ireland claimed descent from ancient kings.

Irish acceptance of this was very important: the Stuarts were the only British dynasty widely accepted in Ireland as legitimate rulers there.

James's short reign is thus bound up with long-standing questions of Irish and Scottish sovereignty, and the place of Catholics in British society. Still important issues, they are the reasons why a mediocre if principled king, who ruled so briefly, is still such a figure of controversy, if no longer of hate. The memory of '1690' is of James VII, and the last failed attempt of a Catholic king to keep his British thrones. ●

Goaded by the Conventiclers, Charles's army got its revenge at a bridge that wasn't mined

The second Scottish rebellion against Charles II was sparked off by the murder of Archbishop James Sharpe by rebels under arms in May, 1679. To Presbyterians, Sharpe may have been the most hated man in Scotland, but the murder was the desperate deed of desperate and fanatical men. Many must have agreed with the verdict that "although the loon is weel away, the deed was foully done", and certainly the murderers knew they could expect no mercy from the government, and moved west to link up with other rebels.

On May 29, the annual public holiday for Charles's restoration, a party of conventiclers rode into Rutherglen and read out a manifesto denouncing the religious policies of the government – which responded by calling up from the South-West one of their key military leaders, John Graham of Claverhouse.

On June 1 he expected to surprise a conventicle at Drumclog, south-west of Strathaven, but instead found his opponents drawn up in battle lines.

They had some cavalry, and some infantry armed with swords and firearms, but the rest had only home-made pikes, cleeks (halberds), pitchforks and other similar rustic weapons.

*But up and spak cruel Clavers then
We' haste wit una wicked skit!
Gae fire upon yon Westland men
I think it is my sov'reign's will*

The conventiclers prayed and raised a cry to Heaven in the words of Asaph to the melody of 'Martyrs' the 76th Psalm: *In Judah's land God is well known, with its menacing finish By Him the sp'rits shall be cut off*

Then they charged across boggy ground and shattered the line of dragoons. Claverhouse's horse was pitchforked and fled with its rider – and his men with him.

The rebels were now able to occupy Glasgow, but they set up their

THE REBELS' BLOOD RAN 'LIKE WATER'



Saviour of some Covenanters fleeing after their defeat: Anne, Duchess of Hamilton

main camp on the south side of the Clyde at Bothwell Brig near Hamilton, holding possession of the bridge itself.

Until 1650 this had been the lowest crossing place on the Clyde. The bridge of today is basically the 17th-century bridge, but widened and improved beyond recognition in 1826 and 1871.

It now has four spans with ribbed

arches and triangular cutwaters to cope with the force of water as the river narrows.

The bridge in 1679 was just 12 feet broad, and rose with an incline of 20 feet towards the centre.

Once the rebels were encamped, they spent the next three weeks in debates that said much for their

political and theological sophistication but very little for their military common sense.

Meanwhile, the government had built up a large force under the King's bastard son, the Duke of Monmouth, who was empowered if necessary to use English troops to put down the rebellion.

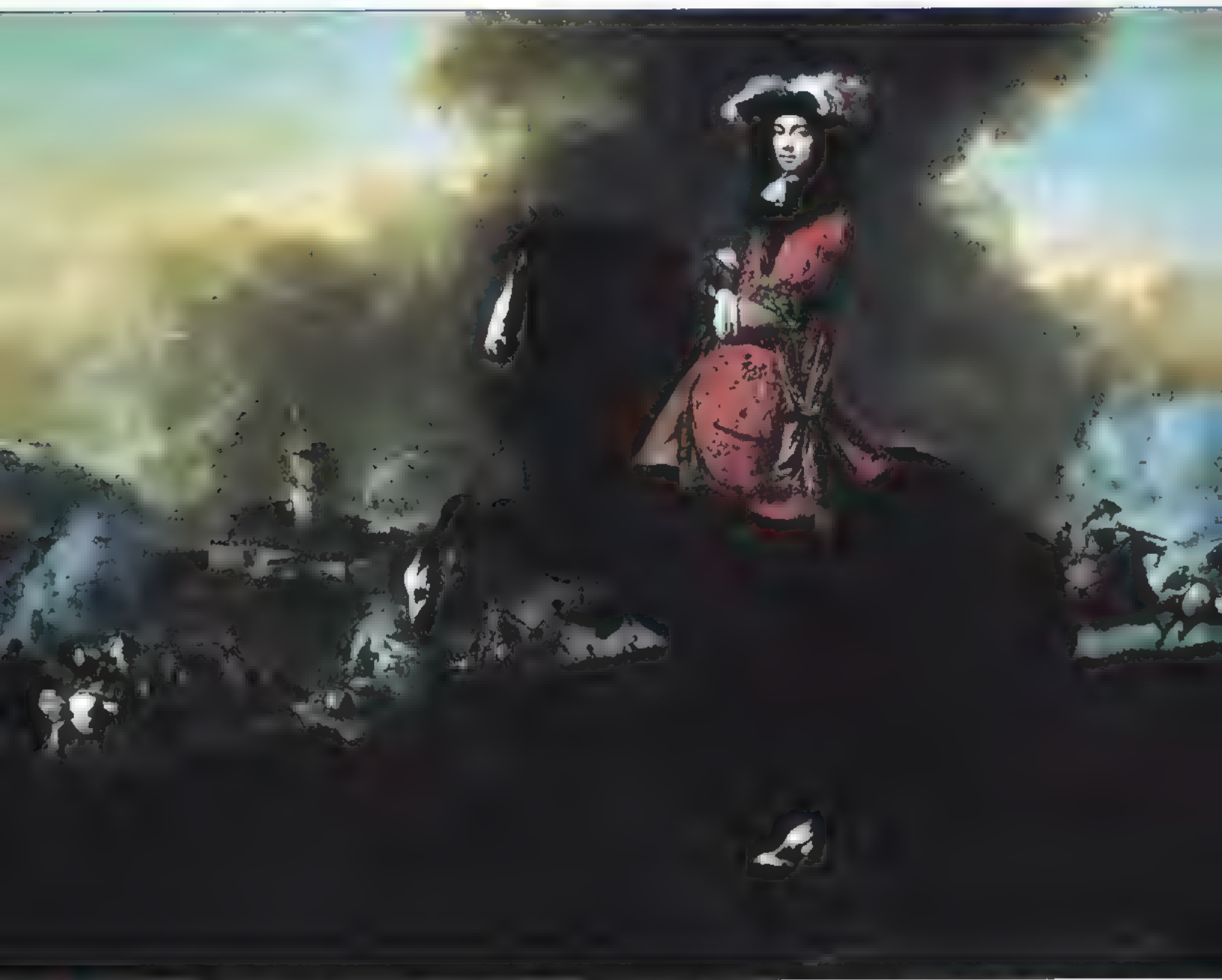
Monmouth reached Edinburgh on June 18, and by June 21 he and his commanding officers – including Claverhouse – were before Bothwell Brig on the north side of the Clyde with artillery and 10,000 men.

The rebels had some 4,000 men and one small cannon. Their debates had caused their numbers to shrink by half, and their leader, Robert Hamilton, younger son of Sir Thomas Hamilton of Preston and Fingalton, was a religious fanatic but no general.

On June 22, a contingent of 300 men led by David Hackston and Halibut Haughhead, defended the bridge with their little brass cannon. The main body of the rebel army was on higher ground, near the Little Lark, Hamilton. After some skirmishing, the rebels sent two envoys with a drummer to Monmouth, who said that he would treat with the rebels only if they first laid down their arms.

Robert Hamilton remarked, "Aye, and hang next." In turn, Monmouth asked for Hamilton's ultimatum, which was "No surrender".

It took two hours of pounding by the government artillery before Hackston and his men were forced back from the bridge. Through the incompetence of Hamilton, the rebels failed to mine the bridge,



■ An element of mercy: the Duke of Monmouth commanded the King's army at Bothwell Brig in 1679 and chose to treat the defeated Covenanters leniently.

which they could have done with one keg of powder, and Monmouth's forces were thus able to cross the Clyde in unbroken order.

The government's bombardment soon did its work, and Monmouth's cavalry put the rebels to flight.

Hamilton was one of the first to leave the field. There were probably more deaths among the rebels after than during the battle. Two hundred or more fleeing rebels may have been killed, and a vengeful Claverhouse was among the last to quit the scene where he, "and his troop, mad for revenge, did the most cruel execution."

Some fugitives who sought refuge in the parish church of Hamilton were executed there, while others were taken enough to find the protection of the young Anne, Duchess of Hamilton, a lady of great piety and

strong Presbyterian principles. The tide of battle was turned before 10am, and by noon the Privy Council in Edinburgh was discussing news of the victory, brought by a horseman who rode 35 miles as the crow flies.

No horseman had galloped to Alexander Peden, far away in the Borders, and yet he saw a vision which made him refuse to preach and constrained him to send the people to pray, as he saw the soldiers "hagging and hashing them down and their blood is running like water."

Monmouth spared those who surrendered as could not kill men in cold blood "that is only for butchers." But his return to England in July was a sign that the government was preparing to get tough again.

There were a limited number of executions, but five were of men



■ Monument now marks battle site.

convicted (and hanged at Magus Muir) not of murdering Sharpe but merely of expressing approval of the murder afterwards. The prisoners had been marched, roped in pairs, to Edinburgh, where they were met by a rabble jeering: "Where's your God? Where's your God?"

Around 1,200 prisoners were housed in a vacant walled-in part of Greyfriars Churchyard or, in the case of the wounded, in George Heriot's School.

Eventually, 258 prisoners were shipped off to Barbados, only for most of them to be drowned off Orkney. And the policy of forfeiting and fining to the enrichment of the government's agents – the very policy that had helped spark the rebellions of 1666 and 1679 – was begun anew. ●

Adventurer in the name of the Lord

A 'Prophet' of sorts, the Rev Alexander Peden led a bizarre life under constant pursuit which, in the end, saw him as one of two field preachers still standing in the field

Alexander 'Prophet' Peden led one of the most bizarre lives in Scottish history. An outlaw for 23 years, a prophet, a gun-toting minister and a political prisoner on the Bass Rock, he inspired histories in the 19th century and famous novelists were drawn to his tale

Walter Scott based the fanatical John Balfour of Burley in 'Old Mortality' on him. One of Robert Louis Stevenson's best tales – of Tod Laprik – is about him. Yet at the start of the 21st century he is forgotten

Perhaps wisely, Scotland has turned its back on its Calvinist past. In the process, Peden and his contemporaries have dropped from our collective consciousness. He and the other Covenanting martyrs are still used to sustain certain sectarian views, but their image of Peden as a barely field preacher denies the complexity of the man. Maybe it's time we re-engaged with the likes of Peden if we are ever to have a balanced conception of our Calvinist inheritance

Born in 1626, Peden was the son of a bonnet laird from Auchincloch, near Sorn in Ayrshire. He grew up with the Covenanting struggle and it dominated his life. As a youth he possibly underwent law work, the psychologically traumatic discipline of attuning your mind to think only good thoughts. The reward for success was a



■ How Peden might have died: Covenanters on the gallows. In the event, he died in bed and was 'hanged' later.

prophetic spiritual hotline to God. Peden probably practised a brand of mystic Calvinism, a Scots tradition with a lineage back to Knox – who believed he was the Lord's trumpet

Peden seems to have viewed himself similarly. In 1648 he studied arts at Glasgow University, a bastion of the Covenant, before becoming a precentor or psalm teacher at Farbolton in Ayrshire, and clerk of the kirk session

He was hauled before the session once when a young woman accused him of fathering her child. The case was found not proven after another man confessed to paternity. Distracted at the outcome, the young woman committed suicide, allegedly at the spot where Peden had prayed to be found not guilty

The scandal did not slow down his career. In 1659 he was selected to be minister of New Luce parish in Galloway, despite the fact his Latin was 'prettie weell composed, but not weell

delivered'. However, the Restoration turned his world upside down with its betrayal of the Covenant and abolition of Presbyterianism. Peden couldn't accept that and was purged from the Kirk in 1663 for refusing to renounce the Covenant

Leaving his pulpit, he prophesied that no government hireling would fill his place. As it turned out, he was right, for it remained vacant for 30 years

Like many Presbyterian ministers, he took up illegal field preaching. A career move that was to last 23 years

James Nisbet of Hardhill has left us a portrait of Peden's preaching: "Such was the weighty and convincing majesty that accompanied what he spoke, that it obliged the hearers both to love and fear him. I observed that, between every sentence, he paused a little, as if he had been harkening what the Lord would say to him, or listening to some secret whisper. And sometimes he would start, as if he had some surprising sight."

Charismatically apocalyptic in style,

he urged his audiences to repent due to the imminence of God's judgment

He lambasted his former Galloway parishioners for their ignorance of God's will. "I'd rather have one of yon sufferers that are bred at Christ's school in through Clydesdale, than have ane hundred of you"

And for their backsliding from the cause. "Ye meet together, housefuls of you, dancing and leaping through ither, young men and young women of you, with your graceless, wanton mirth, and your lusts burning strong within you. O Sirs, is this a time for such work, when God is threatening to lay poor Scotland desolate?"

Instead, he advised them to go to the snowy fields and pray until they were wet to the skin, then obey the law of the king or his Council for "a praying party will ruin them yet"

The power of prayer wasn't his only weapon. Early in 1666 he was outlawed for conventicling but intriguingly was singled out as being armed with 'sword and pistols'

He seems to have been involved in

the Pentland Rising but apparently through his prophetic powers which were hotly debated - avoided the disastrous defeat at Rullion Green.

One thousand merks was offered for his capture, yet he evaded the law perhaps through his famous disguise mask that made him look like he had a terrible disease.

For seven years he was a fugitive until he was taken by troopers at Knockdhu House between Colmonell and Ballantrae. After a year in Edinburgh's Tolbooth, Peden was taken to Scotland's Alcatraz for ministers the seabird-infested Bass Rock in the Firth of Forth.

Conditions were severe and he petitioned to be removed having been "reduced unto great extremity and sickness".

Locked up and denied conversation, he was permitted out under guard once a day, to - as Peden described it - "breathe the open air, and envy the birds their freedom".

The guards trapped on the rock with prophetic ministers faced unexpected dangers.

The Governor was taken with gambling, an activity Peden thought sinful. He reproved him three times but still the Governor continued. Finally Peden prophesied to him:

"Sir, since you will not amend, the Lord will strike you with a wound that will smite you to the very heart!"

Soon after, the governor's young daughter was caught by the wind, blown off the rock and drowned. Women often seem to have suffered from Peden's godly insights.

After four and a half years, the Privy Council decided the Bass wasn't far enough and banished him into slavery on the plantations of Virginia.

What happened next is unclear. Shipped from Leith, he never reached Virginia. He was to be transferred to a convict ship at Gravesend but the skipper refused to take him.

Peden returned to Scotland in 1679, missing the disaster at Bothwell Brig - a major setback for the conventicling movement as it left only what the government saw as a few fanatics.

During the Killing Times he continued field preaching and evaded capture, often sheltering in Ireland. News that Peden and 100 armed 'fanatics' had left Ireland in 1685 spread terror among the country ministers of Ayrshire and Galloway "so that they durst not stay at their churches, but retired into garrison townes".

John Graham of Claverhouse and his troops were determined to stamp out the 'fanatics'. This led to a judicial murder that is a legend in the annals of the Covenanter martyrs - the Murder of John Brown of Priest Hill.

Peden had married Brown and



■ Peden's disguise mask made him look like he suffered a terrible disease.

Isabel Weir in 1682 when he prophesied to the bride she would soon need "a bloody winding sheet".

In April, 1685, Peden had been sheltering at Brown's farm between Murkirk and Lesmahagow. He left early in the morning, and with his usual good fortune, just before Claverhouse and his troopers arrived. They captured Brown and put him to the Test Oath. He refused to take it and Claverhouse, allegedly personally, shot him. A fate Claverhouse noted he suffered "very unconcernedly".

Only two field preachers, Peden and James Renwick the young Cameronian, remained in the field, but even they were disunited. Peden admired the

Cameronians, or Society People, as supporters of the 'true' kirk but he wasn't one of them.

A split developed over Argyll's rebellion in 1685. Peden welcomed any movement whose aim was to drive the 'popish king' James VII from the throne, but for Renwick it wasn't godly enough. The Society People had also disciplined their members for being baptised by Peden, a move that increased fears they wanted to establish their own splinter kirk.

Worse from Peden's perspective, Renwick had been ordained in Holland, a fact that meant he wasn't a properly ordained Scottish minister. He vowed to make Renwick's name "stink above the ground".

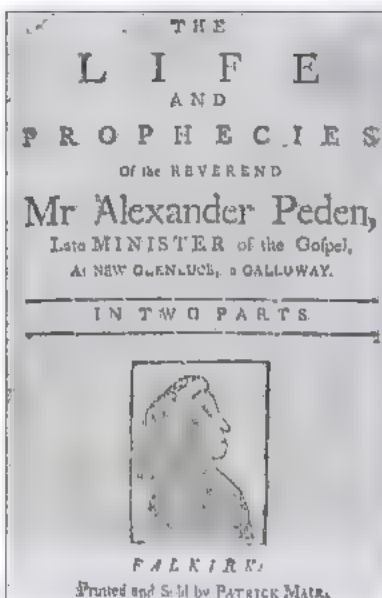
Peden was the last ordained Church of Scotland minister in the field but was dying from illness. A meeting was arranged to test Renwick's doctrinal soundness. He passed, and Peden blessed him, symbolically passing on the mantle of the 'true' kirk.

However, before they parted he gave Renwick some sound advice. "I think your legs too small and your shoulders too narrow to take the whole Church of Scotland upon your back."

In January, 1686, he died at his brother's house in Auchinleck, relishing the joys of the afterlife.

However, even in death Peden's strange life continued. Six weeks after he was interred in the Boswell family vault, he was dug up by troops. They took his body to the gallows tree at Cumnock where he was hanged and reburied like a criminal below the gallows.

Justice had to be seen to be done. ●



■ Bizarre: Peden's life told in a book.

A MASK, BIBLES AND A WALKING STICK

Some relics of Prophet Peden can still be seen today. They were first brought to light by the Rev James Murray of Cumnock in the mid-19th century.

Writing Mrs Cooper, a great-granddaughter of Peden, at her cottage on the heights of Crossgellioch, he was shown a box she kept in the premises that contained Peden's disguise mask (left), rapier, tobacco tin and walking stick.

As you would expect from a Covenanter minister, many Bibles have been handed down.

Peden's family Bible still exists and has an example of his handwriting from 1649 as well as a piece of a Covenanter flag.

Many of his Bibles were publicly exhibited at the end of the 19th century and some haven't been seen since.

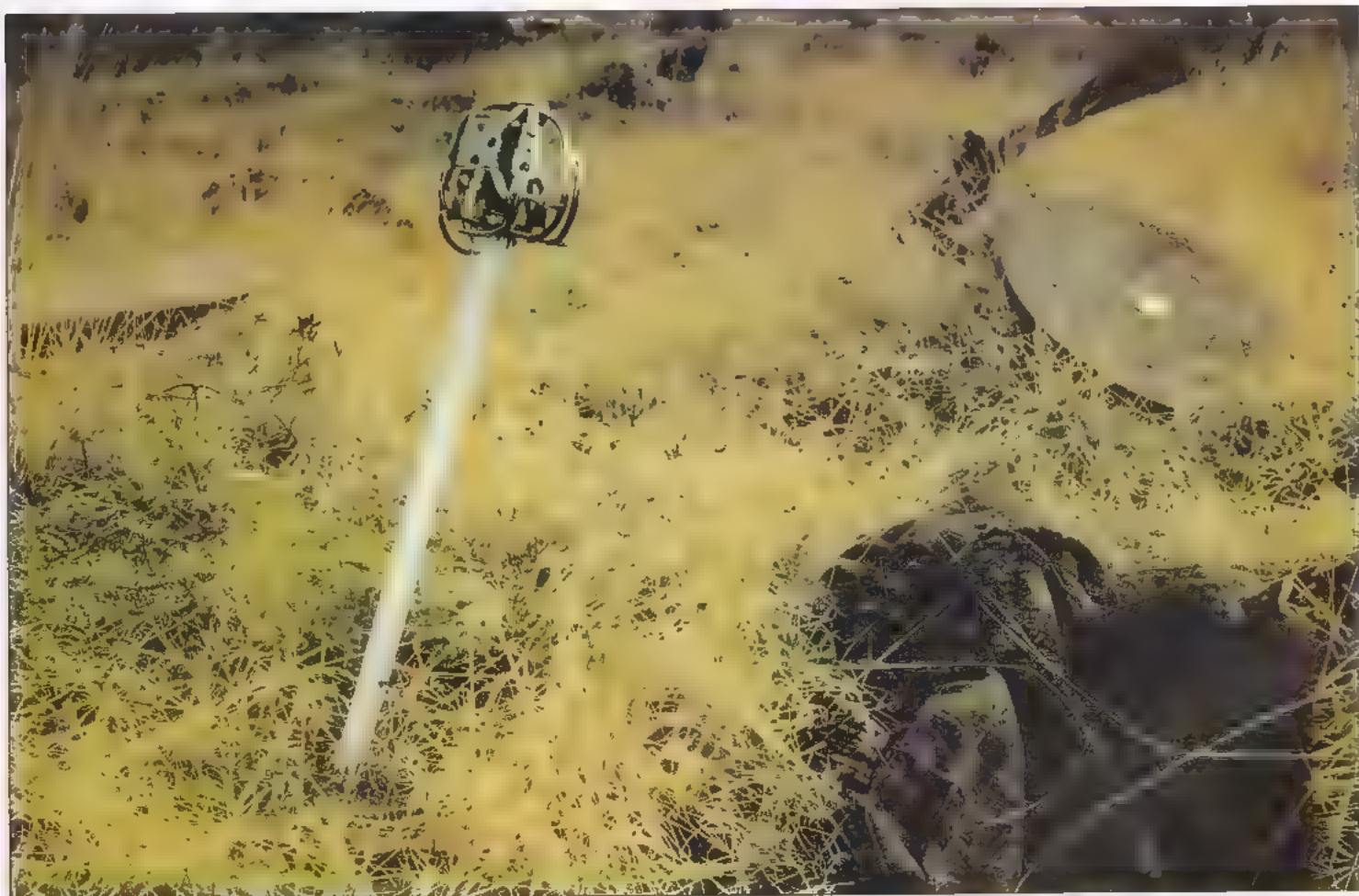
Two were exhibited at the Free Church Jubilee Meeting in 1893. His pocket Bible of 1653, annotated by Peden himself, was lent by a Mr Connell and his pulpit Bible by a minister, Mr Scott of Abernethy.

Two other Bibles may exist and were last recorded at the end of the 19th century as being held by a Mr Francis Cooper, of Alloa, and a brother of Mr James Mudie of Edinburgh.

Also there was Peden's Cup, which was last seen at the Glasgow Exhibition of 1911, when it was lent by a Mrs Andrew of an unknown location.

Today, Peden's disguise mask and rapier can be seen in the National Museum at Scotland and one of his Bibles across the road at Greyfriars Kirk in Edinburgh. His walking stick is held at Dean Castle in Kilmarnock.

What he saw was about what we got



■ One of the most accurate of the Brahan Seer's visions was that of the Battle Culloden – in which, he said, 'heads will be lopped off by the score'.

Give or take one or two that are still unfulfilled, the prophecies of the Brahan Seer are all the more remarkable with the benefit of hindsight

With the millennium firmly behind us but with memories of prophet-mongering still fresh, perhaps it is time to take stock and look at one of the Highland's genuine seers.

Many will have heard of the Brahan Seer, known as Coinneach Odhar Fiosaiche in Gaelic tradition, or as Sallow Kenneth, the one who knows. However, despite his relative fame, at least in Highland tradition, there is still some uncertainty about his career or when he actually lived.

This is because what we do know of Coinneach Odhar is based on oral accounts recorded in the 19th century so that we have very little in the way of historical records to

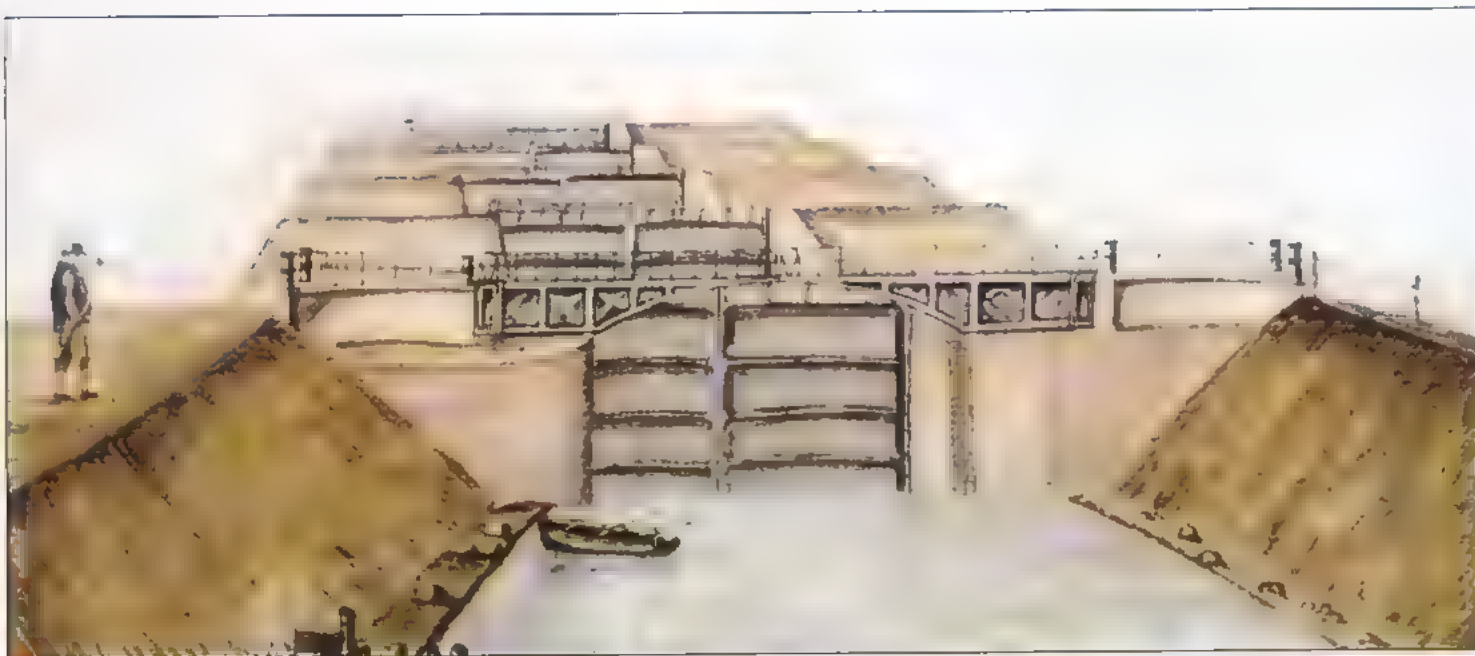
substantiate traditional claims.

For instance, both the Lewis and Ross shire claim him as one of their sons. There is a strong belief that he was born somewhere in the 17th century, perhaps even earlier, in Baile na Cille, in the Parish of Uig on the Isle of Lewis. Others suggest that he was born and raised in Easter Ross.

Regardless of his birthplace, or when he actually lived, what is certain about him is that he had a close connection with the Clan Mackenzie. So much so, that some believe he was a Mackenzie – though surnames were hardly in vogue at this time in the Highlands. And it is more or less true that Coinneach Odhar's attributed prophecies are

congruous with Clan Mackenzie's history when they were at the height of their power which took in the Isle of Lewis and most of Ross-shire. So why then is such an historically shadowy character so famous?

The answer lies in his ability to tell future events long before they actually happened – or, in other words, he possessed the gift of second sight. Although this phenomenon has been recorded worldwide, it seems that it has been given (perhaps unnecessarily) a Celtic dimension. The phrase comes from the Gaelic *an de shealladh* which is usually translated as 'second-sight', but if we take a more literal translation we get 'two visions'.



■ The Caledonian Canal, which was eventually engineered by Thomas Telford and completed in 1822, was predicted long before that by the Brahan Seer.

which perhaps explains the phrase better, in that we have first vision – the ability to see normally – whereas the seer has the capacity to visualise, as a second (paranormal) vision, future events Coinneach had this ability to a marked degree and soon stories of his talent spread throughout the Highlands and Islands and entered the lore of the district. According to tradition, he received this gift at a young age. And, again, there are different stories, depending on which source you read, of how he gained this extraordinary ability.

The Lewis version says his mother was told where to find a stone which would give its finder second sight – as a reward from a Norwegian princess's ghost because the mother had shown such admirable fearlessness of the supernatural in interrogating the ghost when it appeared to her! The mother then gave the stone to her son. A Ross shire tradition suggests that he found the stone while asleep and used it to find out whether a woman was trying to poison him. What most of accounts agree on is that he possessed a small stone which some describe as being round with a hole in it, small, either blue or pearly white, and perhaps polished. Whether the stone gave him the actual ability to foresee events or merely aided him in the endeavour is open to debate.

What is beyond question are the many prophecies attributed to Coinneach Odhar. In his book *The Brahan Seer*, Alexander Mackenzie divided the prophecies into four categories: those attributable

to natural shrewdness; those unfulfilled; those about which there is doubt; and those wholly or partly fulfilled. But there is little doubt on the accuracy of his Culloden word. When passing over what became the battlefield, he exclaimed

*Oh! Drummoisie, thy bleak moor shall,
ere many generations have passed away,
be stained with the best blood of the
Highlands. Glad am I that I will not see
that day, for it will be a fearful period,
heads will be lopped off by the score,
and no mercy will be shown
or quarter given on either side.*

Here are other examples that gave the flavour and range his prophecies. Strange as it may seem to this day, the time will come, and it is not far off, when full-rigged ships will be seen sailing eastward and west by the back of Tothnahurich Hill

This predicted the Caledonian Canal engineered by Thomas Telford and finished in 1822. Another was:

*When there are seven bridges over the Ness,
Inverness will be consumed with fire from
the black rain and tumble into the sea.*

Obviously (and thankfully), this remains unfulfilled. Yet another said: *The day will come when the Chanonry
of Ross, when full of dead Mackenzies,
will fall with a fearful crash.*

Although many Mackenzies are buried here, including the last Seaforth, some believe that this prophecy has not yet been fulfilled.

Coinneach Odhar's talent was also his undoing (he was burned to death in a tar barrel for witchcraft) which resulted from his final prophecy.

Tradition relates that Isabella Mackenzie, the wife of Seaforth, kept on pestering Coinneach for

information about her husband who had been in Paris on some business for much longer than expected.

Coinneach replied that he was safe and well but in such a way as to rouse the suspicion of the Countess.

She demanded the truth and Coinneach reluctantly obliged by telling her that her husband was having an affair. Rather than gratitude as Coinneach expected, he felt the full measure of her anger and was put under penalty of death. This was when Coinneach allegedly uttered one of his last prophecies which sealed his fate.

*I see into the far future, I read the doom
of my oppressor. The long descended line
of Seaforth will, ere many generations
have passed, end in extinction and sorrow.*

*I see a chief, the last of his house, both
deaf and dumb. He will be father to four
fair sons, all of whom will go before him
to the tomb. He will live careworn
and die mourning, knowing that the
honours of his line are to be extinguished
and that no future chief of Mackenzies
will rule at Bruhan or Kintail.*

And what Coinneach predicted came to pass.

Many of the traditional prophecies attributed to Coinneach Odhar have been travelling in oral transmission and thus were only written down after many were actually fulfilled.


This is not to demean the oral record but merely to point out that so many prophecies have been attributed to him that we can never know for sure if they were his.

But whoever Coinneach Odhar was, his legacy still remains, reflected in the interest shown by many in his prophetic visions of the Highlands. ■



■ Fortrose Cathedral: graveyard holds last Lord Seaforth and his 'four fair sons'.

When great minds did not think alike



Challenge and change was in the scientific air in the 17th century, and while Scots played their part, there were many complicating factors

■ Galileo's ideas on Jupiter and its moons were defended in a book by Scot John Websterburn.

Science, as we understand the term, is pretty much an idea which dates from the middle of the 19th century. When we think of science in the 17th century, we should really think about natural philosophy, mathematics, and medicine – because these were the separate disciplines in which most ‘scientists’ worked, particularly those who made the important changes which constituted the scientific revolution.

Scotland in the 17th century had

few practitioners in these fields. In its universities, instruction was given not by professors but by regents, who taught the boys everything and were generally specialists in nothing. The country had few mathematicians and not many more well-trained medical men. There was little money for the support of intellectuals and few institutions to accommodate them.

One would not then expect to find much science being done in the country. Certainly there was not a lot, but there was some. It increased

during the 17th century and laid the foundation for later developments.

There was perhaps as much, or more, done by Scots who worked on the Continent. Some had gone as students, others as exiles or refugees, and still others seeking greater opportunities than Scotland provided.

Scots with whom they kept in touch were up to date on what was going on elsewhere, developments which they often disapproved of but about which they knew a good deal.

In natural philosophy the most

important changes came in the methods men were encouraged to use, and in the concepts they employed to cast outmoded Aristotelian ideas which had long been in place.

A man like Galileo was important because he addressed both of these issues. He was an experimenter and an inventor of instruments who began to redefine natural philosophy as being about the measurable movements of bodies which had weight if not yet mass. Out of his



■ Archibald Pitcairne, who adopted Newtonian ideas concerning nature.

work came new sciences of motion and of the static principles useful in engineering. His defence of the Copernican system, and his many observations on which it was based, was everywhere challenging accepted thought. Scots in general did not make much of this for a very long time but among Galileo's defenders at the University of Padua in 1610 was John Wedderburn, who defended in a notable book Galileo's observations and ideas, including those concerning the newly-found moons of Jupiter.

Wedderburn and his brother James had peripatetic careers as physicians and teachers, one ending up in Moravia and the other in London. Among the hundreds of men like them were some who would have shared their interest in the sciences, especially in the ideas brought to natural philosophy by Rene Descartes.

Galileo had seemed to challenge the importance which natural philosophy had as a prop to religion. Descartes went much further. Aptic, he was said by many to have lost faith in Christianity. While surely untrue, it was to get his ideas condemned and where for some time were banned from the

universities. One of the Scots who was vocal in the debate concerning them was Adam Stewart who taught natural philosophy at Leyden University from 1644-53 when he was succeeded by his son, David, who held the chair until 1669.

In Paris, Scots were often on the other side of the debate. Robert Moray, for example, who was later to become an early President of the Royal Society of London, was very interested in the new philosophy and something of a chemist besides.

During the 1630s he had been in



■ Aristotle's ideas were challenged by the 17th century's best brains.



■ Inventor of logarithms: John Napier, the famous Scots mathematician.

Edinburgh and would return again in the 1660s to complain of the lack of interest there in modern ideas. By then, however, things had begun to change. Some, such as Sir Robert Sibbald, who had studied medicine at Leiden and Paris in the 1660s, returned home imbued with the outlook of the Dutch and English Baconians and naturalists who were dedicated to the promotion of natural knowledge and to some measure of experimentation.

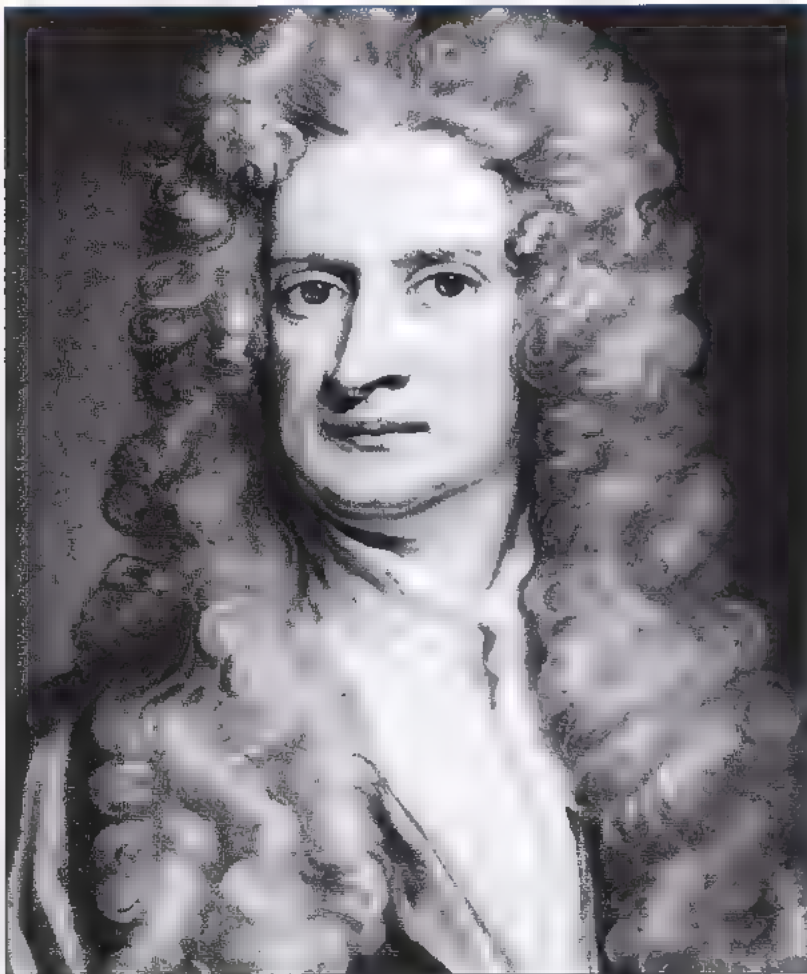
By then they had also generally adopted some of the scepticism of the age. It was not just Cartesian and were proponents of the new astronomy. The next step was the adoption of Newtonian ideas concerning nature, a step taken in Scotland by men like Archibald Pitcairne MD and his friends James and David Gregory.

Such men were not without opposition. George Sinclair, a Glasgow professor notable for his inventions and for his defence of witchcraft along the same empirical lines taken by many notable members of the Royal Society of London, had a controversy with James Gregory which turned in part on the meaning of weight, force, pressure and the nature of fluid bodies—concepts which had been

given crucial significance by Torricelli, Descartes and Pascal. Their controversy helped to make the new science known and showed it to have practical applications. Sinclair was known as an engineer who had drained mines and constructed waterworks. By 1710, Newtonian natural philosophy which the Gregories had helped to introduce, was known and being taught in some fashion in several of the university classrooms.

Scotland produced no figures of significance in the quest for new philosophical ideas and methods but it was more advanced than much of Europe when it came to acceptance of novelties. But one has to look outside the kingdom, as well as within it, to see how Scots related to the new science. Within it, poverty, religious intolerance, the unchanging nature of educational institutions, and the lack of perceived use for the new ideas militated against their acceptance.

Mathematics did not suffer quite so much from these forces. Of the Scottish mathematicians of the period, John Napier is best known. He invented logarithms (1614) and a primitive slide-rule, perhaps for religious reasons. It is thought these were related to calculations. ▶



■ Isaac Newton: With the help of the Scots Gregory family, Newtonian natural philosophy was being taught in universities.

Scotland was more advanced than much of Europe when it came to acceptance of novelties

depended in the first case on foreign ideas and workers but by the end of the period this was no longer so

By the end of the century the Chirurgeons Company of Edinburgh thought it fit for their new Hall, opened in 1697, to have a chemistry laboratory. Its main use was distilling. By then Dr Archibald Pitcairne was also interested in chemistry, at least in part for alchemical reasons similar to those of his friend, Sir Isaac Newton. Scots were not noticeably backward in these fields but they could not pride themselves on much in the way of novel achievements.

In medicine and surgery it was different. The first of these subjects had found its theory transformed by the new science. Galilean science had produced a kind of medical mechanics which sought to see the body as a sort of mechanism or hydraulic system. As the realm of natural philosophy was re-oriented to something resembling materialism, medicine too had come to share this.

An attempt was also made to see medical problems in terms of particles in motion through the body's complex hydraulic system. By the 1690s no one expounded this view better than Dr Pitcairne, who in 1693 became Professor of Medicine at Leyden, then the world's leading medical school. He stayed there only two years but in the end had trained or influenced many medical men in Holland and Britain.

His successors in the 18th century Scots turned their eyes on the continent, and themselves on the continent. As apothecary surgeons, the general practitioners of the age, and a specialty more or less worked out in Scotland. Abroad, they could point to men like Alexander Reid, the first to lecture publicly on surgery in London, as well as a host of distinguished military surgeons who served in foreign armies.

Scottish science in the 17th century was not noticeably behind that of other European peoples, though it was never in the lead. It compared well with that pursued in any provincial area of Europe and some Scots were well aware and supportive of the novelties of the period and helped to make them commonplace. All too often such men were not in Scotland but their early training had been taken there.

In the end, their example worked powerfully to change the educational institutions so that Scotland's most important export in the 17th century was people and their value would increase as their training in modern learning improved. ●

► which he made to predict the judgment of the world and the end of time. Less peculiarly rooted were his work on trigonometric functions and geometry.

Religious pressures also affected the work of John Craig. He tried, by using a sort of probability theorem about the length of time it would take for the biblical revelations to become forgotten or implausible, to date the coming judgment. Craig was also known among his peers for work on fluxions or the mathematics of differential equations. Most of this was done after he had left Scotland to take up a clerical living in England. He remained in contact with Scottish mathematicians until he died in 1731.

Others who worked on related problems concerned with the evolution of the calculus included various members of the Gregory family (James, David, James). Mathematics should not be thought of as "pure" only; it included such mixed topics as astronomy, surveying, navigation, music, and fortification. Scots contributed nothing original to any of those areas during the 17th century, although they did produce some navigational works and useful maps. After the 1650s there was probably someone

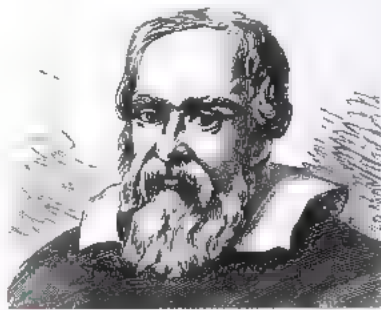
in most years teaching navigation and surveying in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen. Still, there was inadequate support for these activities and a man like the surveyor and map-maker John Adair was forced to live on promises.

But, while the country had had to borrow this expertise before 1660, by 1700 it was producing its own mathematicians. At least half a dozen men had lectured on mathematics in Continental universities during the period, including Duncan Liddel. He is known to Scots as the founder of the chair of mathematics at Marischal College, Aberdeen, and to Europeans as the first to teach publicly the hypotheses of Copernicus and Tycho Brahe.

Medicine was the other area of

intellectual life which fostered sciences, particularly botany and chemistry as well as medicine. The best known botanist of the time was Robert Morison, who became successively physician and botanist to the King of France, physician to Charles II and keeper of the Oxford University botanical garden. Before these distinctions he was recognized as an expert in the cultivation of the fruits of the East. Scotland itself the pursuit of this knowledge was the creation of a new botanical garden by Sir Robert Sibbald and two of his keepers in the late 1660s. The keeper of this from 1667 on was James Sutherland, who carried out botanical surveys of portions of the country and taught many who went on to do such work in other places.

Chemistry was not lucky enough to find notable theorists but did not lack practitioners. Every well-trained physician and pharmacist knew some chemistry. Throughout the century, there was a steady increase in chemically-based industries such as those in salt, glass, pottery, soap and gunpowder, sugar boiling, the fermenting industries and the metal trades. In most instances this



■ Galileo challenged religion 'prop'.



King James VI: He wanted to see the 'civilizing' of those 'rude parties' of Ulster.

When the deep roots of The Troubles were planted

Predictably, the 'plantation' of Ulster in the 17th century failed to live up to the Crown's expectations. But the impact of the policy is still felt today

Even before his accession to the English and Irish thrones in 1603, James VI of Scotland was familiar with the concept of plantation. From the late 16th century he had sought to tame the recalcitrant inhabitants of Lewis and Harris by planting "colonies among them of answerable inland subjects, that within short time may reform and civilise the best inclined among them, rooting out or transporting the barbarous and stubborn sort, and planting civility in their rooms".

Ultimately, his plans came to nothing and local hostility to the venture frustrated three attempts by 1609 to settle these forfeited Isles with adventurers from Fife. As King of Great Britain and Ireland, James

enjoyed much greater success in the troublesome province of Ulster.

With the 'Flight of the Earls' in 1607, followed by the revolt of Sir Cahir O'Dogherty, James VI and I tried again. Determined to introduce "civility, order and government amongst a barbarous and unsubdued people", the state confiscated (or escheated) the lands belonging to the leading Gaelic lords of Ulster in the counties of Armagh, Tyrone, Fermanagh, Londonderry, Cavan and Donegal.

In these counties James hoped to create a 'British' type of rural society, to establish a number of urban settlements, to segregate the native and settler populations (physically and legally) and to ensure that all settlers were Protestant and

of non Irish birth. Influenced by his earlier attempts to 'plant' Harris and Lewis, the King ensured that land was allocated in relatively small chunks of between 1,000 and 3,000 acres, to roughly 100 Scottish and English landlords (or undertakers, as they were known).

In all, these men received 25 per cent of the confiscated land and in return for low rents were required to introduce 10 British Protestant settler families per 1,000 acres to their estates, to build stone houses, to defend their settlements and to exclude the native Irish.

He also used this as an opportunity to reward his Scottish followers. Thus James's favourite James Hamilton, Earl of Abercorn, who hailed from Paisley in Renfrewshire, ►



■ Harris, where – along with Lewis – the Crown began its 'plantation' policy in an attempt to 'civilise' the natives.

► received grants to extensive tracts of land in County Tyrone, as did another courtier, Andrew Stewart Lord Ochiltree.

English army officers, who had settled in Ireland at the end of the Nine Years' War (1594-1603), were also awarded considerable estates. In the hope of creating a vested Irish interest in the settlement, the government allocated lands to 300 'deserving' Irishmen, who had remained loyal to the English during the recent war. However, few of the favoured Irish were granted lands which they actually occupied, none received what they felt entitled to.

The remaining confiscated acres were used to endow the impoverished Church of Ireland, a number of towns and schools in Ulster, and the only university in Ireland – Trinity College, Dublin. Finally, in a bid to kick start commercialisation and get capital for the plantation, the entire county of Coleraine was allocated to 12 London livery companies (hence it became known as Londonderry).

Predictably, the reality of the scheme failed to match the King's expectations. Surveys conducted in 1611, 1615 and 1619 all revealed

that targets set by the government had not been achieved. Many settler households had not constructed the required number of buildings or had exploited their holdings for a quick return. Towns were poorly developed and many existed only on paper.

Many undertakers and servitors could not afford to bring in the specified number of settlers and instead leased the land to the native Irish, making a mockery of the policy of segregation.

Even though the plantation had brought a temporary peace to Ulster (there was only an abortive conspiracy in 1615), the continued presence of large numbers of native Irish posed a real security threat,

especially given the intrigues and the plotting of the exiled earls on the continent. Therefore the colonists worked 'with the sword in one hand and the axe in the other'.

More importantly, from the state's perspective, the settlement failed to generate much revenue; so in 1622 the state threatened to expropriate land from planters who had not fulfilled their plantation obligations. True to its word, after a humiliating 14 day trial in the Star Chamber, the government confiscated Derry, Coleraine and the 40,000 acres belonging to the City of London and fined the City £70,000 for breaching its contract.

Ironically, the unregulated



■ Lewis – second target of a plan to plant colonies of 'answerable subjects'.



Dublin's Trinity College benefited from leftover acres.

settlement – especially by Lowland Scots – of counties Antrim and Down proved much more successful than the official plantation.

In 1605 Sir Hugh Montgomery, sixth laird of Bradstone in Ayrshire, and James Hamilton carved up the estates of Con O'Neill, Lord of Upper Clondeboy and the Great Ards, in a tripartite agreement.

Their plantations quickly prospered and the author of the Montgomery Manuscripts recorded how, within a short period

"the country was brought into a more civil and settled state, the people were more industrious and more settled in their habitations, and the country was more improved than it was before. The people were more industrious and more settled in their habitations, and the country was more improved than it was before. The people were more industrious and more settled in their habitations, and the country was more improved than it was before."

In County Antrim the Catholic Sir Randal MacDonnell, later first Earl of Antrim, initiated similar schemes and on numerous occasions the King thanked him for his services in improving "those barren and



■ Surviving example of a Scots baronial-style 'plantation' house – Ballygally Castle House Hotel in Antrim.

Colonisation went at a faster pace than settlement of North America and 30,000 Scots had migrated to Ulster before 1641

uncultivated parts of the country, and planting a colony there"

As it was, the plantation concept was familiar to Randal who had been fostered on the Scottish island of Arran (hence his name Randal Arranach) and thus exposed to James's unsuccessful attempts to 'plant' the troublesome Highlands with Scottish Lowlanders

Randal himself thus formed an important human link between the Irish and Scottish plantations

Together with his son, he encouraged English and Scottish Protestant tenants to settle on his lands, and by the late 1630s the Antrim estate could boast well over 20 British (or Protestant) families,

while the town of Dunluce consisted of "many tenements, after the fashion of the Pale, peopled for the most part with Scotsmen"

Moreover, the earls promoted the Protestant religion and rebuilt or refurbished churches (such as the ones at Clough or Dunluce) for their Protestant tenants.

Despite their failure to generate cash for the English Treasury, the Ulster plantations – whether regulated or voluntary – prospered

Colonisation progressed at a faster pace than the settlement of North America and before 1641 roughly 30,000 Scots migrated to Ulster. In stark contrast, the numbers of migrants crossing the Atlantic remained relatively small, with about 6,000 settlers in Massachusetts by 1636 and 8,000 in Virginia by 1640

Equally important was the fact that those colonists who settled in Ulster were more skilled, and fared better, than those who migrated to New England.

The construction of towns, villages, churches and manor houses – many in Scottish baronial style – permanently transformed the physical landscape

The Ulster economy also became

increasingly commercialised as the growth in the wool and cattle trades highlight (the numbers of live cattle exported from select Ulster ports increased tenfold)

Finally, the plantations in Ulster (and elsewhere in Ireland) also changed the face of Irish politics. They ensured that the much larger Irish parliament that met in May, 1613, enjoyed a clear Protestant majority of 32 seats (only one seat out of 64 in Ulster was held by a Catholic)

From the outset, a Scottish rather than an English or British agenda dominated the colony. The Scottish settlers brought with them their Presbyterianism and their distinctive political beliefs and quickly formed a distinct cultural community that never related closely to the administration in London or Dublin

Instead, their sympathies and interests lay in Scotland, where they sent their children to be educated, with whom they traded, and from where they drew their Presbyterian ministers

By 1638 and the outbreak of the Bishops' Wars in Scotland – these migrants, who looked to Glasgow

and Edinburgh for religious and political leadership, represented an even greater threat to national security than their Catholic neighbours. The Irish Lord Deputy, Thomas Wentworth – later Earl of Strafford – branded them political subversives and forced them to take an oath of loyalty to Charles I (the infamous 'black oath')

In retaliation to this and Wentworth's other 'thorough' policies in Ireland, the Scottish planters allied themselves with the Scottish Covenanters and played a prominent role in bringing the Lord Deputy to trial – and to the scaffold in London

The removal of Wentworth's draconian hand in Ireland in turn facilitated the outbreak of the Irish rebellion and ultimately the onset of the 'Wars of the Three Kingdoms'

Thus in the short-term the significant Scottish presence in Ulster facilitated one of the greatest crises faced by 17th-century Britain and Ireland

In the long term, it created problems the legacies of which the people – especially of Northern Ireland – continue to live with and try to reconcile ■

Sir Harry's fun lit up dark days

Tragedy was in the wings as Lauder's talent took him from mine to riches

He has been described as one of the greatest entertainers who ever lived – a larger-than-life genius who practically created the image of the kilted, canny and thrifty Scot. People either loved Sir Harry Lauder or hated him – but no-one could deny he had magnetism, talent and kindness in abundance.

For Lauder, all the world was a stage. His eccentric, zany brand of comedy, and his outfit of gnarled stick, Glengarry, kilt and cape were as much loved in America as in Scotland. Yet he was more than a comedian who could warble. He was a brilliant songwriter, a friend of kings and presidents – and even, in his own way, a war hero.

Lauder's beginnings were humble. Born in Portobello near Edinburgh in August, 1870, he was one of eight children. His father, a potter, died when he was 12, leaving his mother to look after the family. She went back to her native Arbroath but moved the family soon after to Hamilton in Lanarkshire to be near her brother.

Harry found a job in the local coal mines, but it was tough work and he resolved to get out and try to make a living on the stage.

There was no doubting his talent. The young Lauder had been interested in showbusiness since he had visited a travelling circus in Arbroath.

Encouraged by his fellow pit workers, he began to enter local competitions and to pick up some prize money. This gave him the chance and the confidence – to start appearing in small music halls.

As his talent grew, so did his reputation. He managed to leave the mine and become a full-time entertainer, first travelling around Scotland, and then bravely spreading his wings to England as well. In

1891, he married Ann Vallance, the daughter of a colliery manager. She was to be a constant support to him and he wrote some of his most famous works, including *I Love a Lassie*, *Roamin' in the Gloamin'* and *Queen Among the Heather* for her.

As Lauder's reputation spread, so did demands from abroad. He was eventually booked to appear in America – a country he would tour 22 times in his lifetime and which took him to its heart. The crowds loved Lauder's music-hall medley of jaunty humour, exaggerated Scottish impressions and nostalgic, kailyard songs. However, he was soon to find himself haunted by tragedy.

In 1916 his only son John, who was destined for a career in law, was killed while fighting in France. Lauder and his wife were devastated, but decided the show had to go on and continued with his run of performances in London. In John's memory, Lauder wrote one of his most famous songs – *Keep Right on to the End of the Road*.

His son's death did not diminish Lauder's strong sense of patriotism. Indeed, weeks later, he tried to enlist himself, although he was turned down for being too old. Instead, he turned his attentions to raising huge sums of money for war charities and in doing his bit by travelling to the battlefields to sing for the troops.

To go into the bloody front line as an entertainer then was unthinkable, but coming under enemy fire didn't deter him. He performed in hospitals, barns and dug-outs, raising the morale of both British and American soldiers.

King George V recognised Lauder's contribution to the war effort by knighting him in 1919. However, he suffered another major blow in 1927 when his wife Anne died. A few years later, he moved into a mansion at



■ Even in his own lifetime, Harry Lauder became a caricature of himself.

Strathaven in Lanarkshire. By now he was rich, famous and powerful. He played golf with US presidents and was a favourite of the Royal Family. Winston Churchill called him 'Scotland's greatest ever ambassador'.

When World War II came along Lauder went back to the work he had carried out so brilliantly during the previous conflict. He once again entertained the troops, broadcast on radio, and even appeared at Glasgow docks to thank American crews for coming to Britain's assistance.

Lauder died at home in Strathaven in 1950. His funeral was one of the

largest ever seen in Lanarkshire – all the streets in Hamilton closed for the occasion. The Duke of Hamilton read the lesson, and tributes were received from all over the world.

Today, the pictures and scratched newsreel films of the man with the kilt and crooked stick look dated.

Even in his own lifetime, Lauder became a caricature of himself, and his impressions never bore any real relationship to the true Scottish character.

But he was loved nevertheless, and Scotland and the whole world took him to its heart. ●

Caledonian girl on top

Sheena Easton's American success

There could be no greater contrast than between Sheena Easton and Sir Harry Lauder. Lauder made his living by exaggerating his Scottish roots, while Easton has lived and worked in America for so long that many of her fans don't realise she's not a US native.

Easton, who has risen to become one of the world's most successful female pop singers, was born Sheena Orr in Bellshill, Lanarkshire, in April, 1959.

She studied drama in Glasgow, but her real love was singing, and she got her lucky break when she featured in the TV programme *The Big Time* – about young ones striving for success – in 1979. The programme was a huge success, and it helped push her first single, *Modern Girl*, into the charts.

However, it was her second hit,

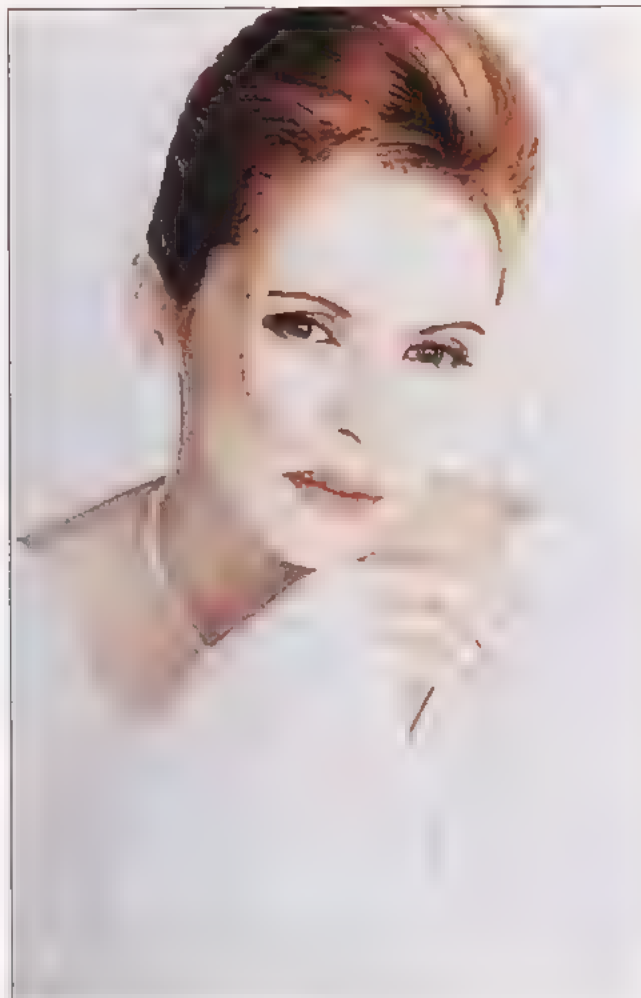
Morning Train, which really established her reputation, especially in the US where it sold more than a million copies and turned her into an instant star.

Easton then decided to focus on the US, putting behind her a disastrous marriage to fellow-singer Sandi Easton – from whom she took her name – and moving to the States to live and work.

Since then, she has gone from strength to strength and has picked up so many music industry awards that she can hardly count them.

But her life has not all gone smoothly. A total of three marriages have collapsed, and she is now single, having adopted two children at the age of 35.

There was further tragedy when her first husband, Sandi, was found dead at his small flat in Stenhousemuir.



■ Instant stardom came to Sheena with her hit *Morning Train*.



■ Rab, the nauseating but lovable rogue, played by Gregor Fisher.

Gregor's a class act in a string vest

Gregor Fisher is the power behind 'Govan philosopher' Rab C Nesbitt – the string-vested lovable rogue who makes all cringe in a mixed emotion of amusement and horror.

Gregor is a hugely talented actor with a wide range of acting abilities.

He was born in 1953 in Bridge of Allan, but later moved to Barrhead in Renfrewshire where he undertook a variety of jobs – including grass-cutting, disposing of hen droppings, and even making lavatory pans in a local factory.

After deciding there was more to life than this, he went to drama school, and later came to the attention of the BBC, which was making the hit series

Scotch and Wry and *Naked Video*.

Fisher was cast as the scruffy, outspoken Nesbitt – and never looked back.

The series he made featuring the character were some of the most popular comedy programmes ever to come out of BBC Scotland.

Rab C Nesbitt has now finally finished its unexpectedly long run of 15 years. Fisher got bored with playing the rascally character and didn't want to slur his speech any more.

We are now likely to see him in more serious roles in the future although as soon as we see his face, we're almost certain to think of Rab and laugh. Or cringe. Or both.

Shy phenomenon or a monstrous myth?



■ Product of a diligent monster-hunter. Photographer Frank Searle spent many years chasing Nessie and this was his most convincing effort

The Loch Ness monster's place in Scottish hearts is as secure as its very existence is insecure. Surveys, photographs and 'sightings' have come to nothing. But we can't live without Nessie

The Loch Ness Monster has come a long, long way since the 6th century. It was first mentioned around that time by a monk from Iona, now it has its own web site (www.lochness-scotland.net) where a time-lapse camera gives a view of the loch and allows you to look for something sinister from the comfort of your own home.

It's hardly more exciting than watching paint dry. But it does show that whether or not Nessie exists, whether it is mystery or myth, it certainly has the power of longevity and the ability to cross time zones.

According to the monk Adamnan, who wrote a biography of St Columba, this terrifying creature was halted in its tracks by the saint when he was visiting the north to

convert the Picts. At the northern end of the loch he came upon a group of Picts who had just buried one of their companions. "killed they said, by _____ or water monster, so Nessie _____ mention was in Latin. Columba told one of his own party, named Mocomuin, to swim across the narrows where the loch discharges into the river, and fetch a boat moored to the opposite bank. As Mocomuin swam, the monster reappeared and was about to attack him when Columba raised one hand and said, in effect: "Stay!"

The monster then swam off in undulating humps, bellowing loudly. If true, this would have been a most convincing display of the powers of Columba's faith and the best sighting of Nessie ever known. Also, it would

be the only record that Nessie has a voice, and the only suggestion that _____ creature could be a _____ public.

Unfortunately, though, Adamnan's account was written a century later without the help of eyewitnesses, and certainly without proof. This has been the problem that has dogged Nessie ever since. Lack of proof.

But in more recent times, recognition has been no problem at all. Scots travelling abroad, to places as distant as South America or Japan, invariably find that Nessie is mentioned as soon as they declare their homeland.

Along with tartan, whisky and bagpipes, the monster has become part of Scotland's worldwide identity. For this, undoubtedly, we can thank (or blame) television. But



■ Nearest thing yet? Underwater 'monster' picture by Boston's Academy of Applied Science.

here is a question asked by most writers on the subject: why is there no mention of a monster between the 6th century and the 20th?

You would certainly have expected Nessie to have been reported at some time over the centuries from Castle Urquhart, which occupies a prime viewing position on a high headland that juts out into the loch, in a place inhabited since the Iron Age.

Yet although the castle, begun in the 12th century, was occupied by a succession of families, clansfolk and soldiers until its destruction in 1691, no such sighting was ever declared.

One writer claimed to have found several references to mythical "large creatures" in Loch Ness over this period. These amount to folk tales rather than sightings — although oral tradition should never be dismissed out of hand.

In Victorian times, when pleasure steamers regularly cruised in Loch Ness and the Caledonian Canal,

Nessie was never spotted. In fact, we have to wait until 1933 for the monster phenomenon to take shape.

That was when the Inverness Courier, a much-respected paper, reported that a local couple had spotted "an enormous animal" cavorting on the surface at the northern end of the Loch. This report used the word "monster". The national media circus immediately clicked into gear, helped by another report later that year that a "monster" had been spotted on dry land, lumbering across the newly-improved road down the loch's western shore.

It can hardly be accidental that the improvement of this road, making open views across the loch easily accessible, coincided with the start of the modern spate of 'sightings'. It also played a part in starting the long succession of fakes and practical jokes which have clouded the monster story ever since. That winter, the London Daily Mail sent

north a big-game hunter and film director called Marmaduke Wetherell to hunt down the beast of the loch.

He claimed to have discovered the footprints of what would surely be a 20ft-long animal which he photographed and took plaster casts of. These were sent off for analysis by zoologists, and the Mail came out with the headline 'Monster of Loch Ness is not Legend but a Fact'.

Monster fever erupted, with Nessie hunters congregating at the loch side in their hundreds until the access road was jammed by traffic.

Eventually the footprints were identified as those of a hippopotamus, almost certainly made by a joker using a dried hippo foot which might have been used as an umbrella stand.

Nevertheless, thousands of eyewitnesses have logged monster sightings down the years since the early Thirties. The intriguing thing is that so many of them have been people of good reputation, ranging from priests and policemen to (in one case) a Nobel prizewinner.

Photographs have been taken, but none has been at all conclusive. Apart from the deliberate attempts at a hoax, strange wave patterns and floating objects on this deep and cold loch, as well as the presence of deer and otters, seem to have confused many observers.

The point is made that an otter, seen in mist or suddenly by car headlights, would seem to be much larger than its actual size.

There are scientific theories too, but none seems to work out. Nessie has been given the scientific name 'Nessiteras rhomboptery', and one hypothesis put forward is that it

could be a descendant of a reptile called the plesiosaur, thought to have been extinct for 70 million years.

According to this far-fetched idea, Nessie entered the loch when it was open to the sea, and survived a succession of Ice Ages. It has been calculated, however, that there would need to be at least 10 monsters in Loch Ness for the line to continue by breeding through all the following centuries, and the likelihood that such a school of creatures was never properly detected seems pretty slim.

Not all believers follow the plesiosaur theory but America's Smithsonian Institute also has a Nessie page on the Internet and says: "Even though most scientists believe the likelihood of a monster is small, they keep an open mind as scientists should and wait for concrete proof in the form of skeletal evidence or the actual capture of such a creature."

Even back in 1933, an English circus owner was offering £20,000 for a captured Nessie, and his money is still safe. Expeditions to the loch by various academic bodies, including the Academy of Applied Science, often using underwater sonar, produced many puzzling echoes but nothing at all convincing.

Meanwhile, the International Society of Cryptozoology, whose interest is in unknown creatures, has a very fat file on the subject.

There is only one thing certain about Nessie. Whenever a new monster theory hits the media, the number of tourists visiting Loch Ness increases almost immediately.

That's one good reason why Nessie is so cherished by Scots — whether she exists or not. ●



■ The direct approach: mini-submarine Pisces hunting Nessie in 1969.

DOOMED ARGYLL'S STONE OF DESTINY



The exiled earl came home to mount a revolt, but it came to a head when the Maiden claimed his, writes biker historian David Ross

JAMES VII of Scotland and II of England reigned for only three years – 1685 to 1688. When his kingship was announced from the cross at Edinburgh on February 10, it in itself did not cause much controversy one way or the other. Most Scots had been shocked at the beheading of his father, Charles I, many years earlier and although James was a Catholic, he was also a Stewart – the ancient royal house of Scotland.

The full-scale revolt caused by his policies had still to raise its head.

The Earl of Argyll, however, took great exception to Scotland being governed by a Catholic, and he returned from exile in Holland to begin an armed revolt.

This was the same Argyll who had been the enemy of Montrose, and who had been instrumental in securing Montrose's execution in Edinburgh several years before.

Argyll landed in his own clanlands and managed to raise a force of some 2,500 men. They marched south and took up quarters in Glasgow, expecting to be backed up by many Scots Protestants. But the backing did not materialise. Argyll had made too many enemies with his various machinations, and he found that the forces arrayed against him were too powerful to overcome.

He ordered his men to retreat to the North-West, but after his army crossed the Leven north of Dumbarton, they were led into a bog by incompetent guides, and to a man the whole army decided to desert, abandoning all their baggage.

Argyll, meanwhile, had disguised himself as a countryman and had taken a route along the south side of the Clyde, in the hope of being ferried across to safety on the north side, once he had made sufficient progress westwards. He had passed Renfrew and was fording the River Cart when he was recognised by two militiamen. He crossed the river and managed to hold off his pursuers with the aid of his pistols, but assistance came to the militiamen, and one of the pursuers managed to wound Argyll with a musket shot.

When the militia caught up with the



■ The boulder against which the wounded Argyll may have rested.

wounded Argyll, he was resting against a large boulder, and was easily captured.

It seems this boulder still stands, although it has probably been moved slightly from its original position. It is said that the reddish patches seen on it are stains caused by the blood dripping from Argyll's wound.

Taking the A8 from Renfrew towards Inchinnan, the road crosses the White Cart and Black Cart in quick succession, then there is a large lay-by on the right. The stone stands in a corner at the far end of this lay-by, which is immediately adjacent to the end of the runway of Glasgow Airport, and is therefore often busy with plane-spotters who are probably oblivious to the little piece of history right next to them.

In fact, in recent years someone has carved the outline of a skull on the boulder – not in any recognition of Argyll, though; this is purely an act of

graffiti. Visitors to this spot may also be intrigued to know that Somerled, the first Lord of the Isles, was stabbed to death in this vicinity in the 12th century. His body was taken to Saddell in Kintyre for burial.

Argyll met his fate on the 'Maiden', the Scots version of the guillotine, which was often used for executions in Edinburgh. The Maiden still survives intact, and can be seen in all its grisly glory in the Museum of Scotland in Chambers Street, Edinburgh.

As Argyll put his head on the block, he is reported to have said: "Tis the sweetest maiden I ever kissed", before giving the signal to his executioners that he was ready. He waved his own arm as the signal for the blade to drop. His head was severed instantly.

Argyll lies within St Giles Cathedral in Edinburgh's Royal Mile, his tomb standing against the wall of the north side of the building. ■

Scotland's Story

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SCOTLAND'S STORY

NEXT WEEK IN Part 27

BLUIDY OR BONNIE?



To the Covenanters violently subdued by him he was known as 'Bluidy Clavers'. To his royalist backers he became 'Bonnie Dundee'. Either way, John Graham of Claverhouse was a bold and uncompromising commander who lived by the sword – and died by a musket ball even as he registered a famous Jacobite victory at the Battle of Killiecrankie.

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